A GROUNDED THEORY OF THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS
OF INVOLVING COLLEGE STUDENTS IN A COURSE ON
ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

By

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Through ethnographic fieldwork and sociological analysis,
a substantive grounded theory of generating and sustaining
student involvement in a college literature course is
developed. "Involving" describes the primary social psycho-
logical process employed by the teacher of this case study.
Six subprocesses implement the core process of involving:
acclimating, evoking, establishing rapport, staging, eluci-
dating, expressing purpose. These subprocesses are explained
in terms of processes because they designate a series of
purposeful actions and speech acts that lead to the creation
of involving events in a classroom setting. Together these
subprocesses and their attendant strategies, conditions,
and dimensions comprise a taxonomy of teacher behaviors,
the primary concepts of which emerged from the ethnographic
data and are illustrated using excerpts from an extensive
collection of fieldnotes and transcribed interviews.

The six subprocesses of involving are interrelated variables that build a series of classroom events into a coherent experience characterized by meaningful teacher-student and student-student exchanges concerning the substantive area of adolescent literature. As applied research, this study has implications for the development of a formal pedagogical theory on involving students in classroom experiences across the curriculum.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

TEACHING LITERATURE: WHY, WHAT, HOW?

And I have known the eyes already, known them all--
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
  And how should I presume?

                    T.S. Eliot
                    The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

A work of art expresses a conception of life,
emotion, inward reality. But it is neither a
confessional nor a frozen tantrum; it is a
developed metaphor, a non-discursive symbol
that articulates what is verbally ineffable--
the logic of consciousness itself.

                    Susanne K. Langer
                    Problems of Art

    This study presents a substantive grounded theory on

the social psychological process of involving students in a

study of adolescent literature. The theory is an attempt

to explain how an experienced college teacher succeeded in

creating educational events that students found meaningful

and enjoyable. The notion of "involving" describes the

interpersonal process employed by the teacher of this study.

Thus "involving" is the core concept used for interpreting

the variations in the teacher's behavior and for interpreting

the students' reactions to the teacher and to the literature.

The terms "involve," "student involvement," and "personal involvement" appear again and again in texts on the teaching of literature. This rhetoric, though agreeable, often flirts with the trite and superficial. Hence, an analysis of the elements of involving students in literature is needed. Such an analysis, however, must find its place among the existing body of theory and research. Before the research methodology of this study is explained and before the theory of involving students in a study of literature is advanced, pervasive issues in the teaching of literature, adolescent literature in particular, will be discussed. To this end, the following questions merit attention: For what reasons should teachers teach literature? What literature should students read and study? How should literature be taught?

Why Teach Literature?

A survey of the texts on teaching literature reveals a variety of reasons for bringing literature into the classroom. Some educators stress the importance of promoting growth in literary appreciation and of training children to have discriminating tastes (Early, 1960; Commission on English of the CEEB, 1965; Adler, 1982). The development of such critical thinking skills as evaluation, interpretation, and inductive reasoning are the focus of yet other

educators (Booth, 1982; Petrosky, 1982; Sullivan & Hurley, 1982). And then there are myriad humanistic goals, the proponents of which view literature studies as a way of furthering such processes as gaining a vision of life through the eyes of others (Carlsen, 1956), stimulating thinking about values (Hipple, 1968/1969), relating literature to personal experience (Daigon, 1973), producing a new understanding of oneself (Bleich, 1975), insuring smooth individual and cultural development (Applebee, 1978), engaging in an examination of self and world (Schwartz, 1979), developing a finely tuned consciousness (Miller, B., 1980), and educating the imagination (Miller, J., 1982).

Ultimately, all of these reasons can be subsumed under the encompassing goals of teaching students to enjoy reading, to enjoy gleaning insights from reading, and to enjoy responding to literature. "First of all," Hipple (1973) says, "the study of literature can be--and should be--fun" (p. 55). Squire (1969) concurs by recommending that teachers work toward creating delight in reading. Walker (1973) seeks "oohs" and "aahs" from students discovering new ideas in literature. Mandel (1970) sees the study of literature as a form of play because, he says, "we relax, we open ourselves to experience" (p. 2). And, not insignificantly, the most recent (October, 1982) position statement on the English basics put forth by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), in a small pamphlet called Essentials of

English, endorses the indispensable role of pleasure in the study of literature. This document says:

> Literature is the verbal expression of the
> human imagination and one of the primary means
> by which a culture transmits itself. The
> reading and study of literature add a special
> dimension to students' lives by broadening
> their insights, allowing them to experience
> vicariously places, people, and events other-
> wise unavailable to them, and adding delight
> and wonder to their daily lives. (n.p.)

But, of course, the virtues of delight and wonder are not limited to reading and responding to literature. Cognitive psychologists claim that the supreme instructional task is to teach people how to learn (Bransford, 1979). Perceptual psychologists say that learning is discovering the personal meaning that something has for the individual (Combs et al., 1976). And Good and Brophy (1978) advise teachers to expect their students to enjoy learning. Putting these ideas together, educators can arrive at a dictum of worth: Teach students to enjoy learning by directing them toward avenues of personal discovery. Literature is such an avenue.

What Literature Should Be Taught?

Guiding students to avenues of personal discovery, to places where they can become intrigued by the richness of human experience, is an important and rewarding teacher task. In turn, teachers need guides. And often these guides are the literary works that teachers choose to teach. Indeed, what selections can further the goal of leading

students to avenues of personal discovery; what literary works should be taught in the English classroom?

A current controversial issue concerning book selection is whether or not adolescent novels should be included in the high school English curriculum. This issue can bring to the fore--in department meetings, in school halls, in teacher lounges--strong differences in what counts as literature. Are adolescent novels "literature"? Further, what is "adolescent literature"?

Novels designated as adolescent literature--sometimes referred to as "young adult literature" or "junior novels"-- can include such time-honored classics as Bunyan's <u>Pilgrim's Progress</u> or Twain's <u>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</u> and such contemporary works as Cormier's highly praised <u>The Chocolate War</u> or Bantam Book's popular <u>Choose Your Own Adventure</u> series. Donelson and Nilsen (1980) trace the history of adolescent literature from the early 1800s, when the phenomenon of adolescence began to emerge, to the present in which romances, historical fiction, fantasies, and other genres are written specifically for adolescents. Meade and Small (1973) use the term "adolescent literature" to refer to novels having major characters who are adolescents. These may be written either for a general audience (Guest's <u>Ordinary People</u> is a recent example) or for an adolescent audience (for example, Blume's <u>Forever</u>). As such, even Scoppettone's novel of graphic violence and insanity, <u>Such Nice People</u>, would count as an adolescent novel because the

principal character is a teenage boy who plots the murder of his family.

Other writers are even less specific. For instance, Schwartz (1979) says that "adolescent literature is any literature read by adolescents" (p. 2). And Carlsen (1980) says, "It is that literature which adolescents read" (p. 1). Here, depending on one's definition of "literature," adolescent literature could include cereal box tops and _Playboy_ magazine. Hipple and Bartholomew (1981) suggest that it "may be best to forego restrictive definitions" (p. 725) and to focus on the issue of the value of teaching adolescent literature, however it is defined. This suggestion does not, of course, eliminate the problem of classification; rather, it moves the emphasis from questions on definition to questions on what literature will serve best to approximate educational goals.

Adolescent literature, for the purposes of this study, includes those literary works, contemporary or not, that express the thoughts or fantasies of many adolescents and that often mirror their feelings or experiences. These works, mostly novels, are readings that adolescents can, in the current vernacular, "relate to," i.e., that they can bring to and add to their experiences, interests, and dreams without a passage by passage teacher translation.

It is the very contemporary adolescent novel, not the tried and true classroom fare of which _A Separate Peace_ and _Lord of the Flies_ are now a part, that some English teachers

and other educators believe does not belong in the classroom.
These are books written since 1966, beginning with such
ground-breakers as Hinton's <u>The Outsiders</u> (1967) and Zindel's
<u>The Pigman</u> (1968). And they include what are often called
"problem novels," the best of which, write Donelson and
Nilsen (1980), "treats candidly and with respect problems
that belong specifically to young adults in today's world"
(p. 181).

Candid depictions of sex, divorce, death, violence, and
other topics of the "new realism" are not, it now appears,
the primary reasons for excluding adolescent literature from
the English curriculum. Rather, according to a recent survey
(Samuels, 1983a, 1983b), the absence of adolescent novels is
largely due to teachers' lack of familiarity with these
works. Based on the return of 268 questionnaires sent to
<u>English Journal</u> subscribers, Samuels (1983b) reports:

> I was surprised to find that neither censorship,
> funding, nor district or department requirements
> seem to be major factors in teachers' decisions
> about including adolescent novels in their
> curriculum. According to this survey, teachers
> do not use young adult novels for three major
> reasons. First, they have not read many of the
> YA titles themselves and are not familiar with
> the genre. Second, many teachers believe that
> the novels are not sufficiently challenging in
> structure and style to be taught to average and
> above average high school students. Finally,
> English teachers believe that as transmitters
> of culture, they are responsible for exposing
> students to time-tested classics of world
> literature. (pp. 86-87)

Lack of familiarity with adolescent novels and a bias
toward the "great books," then, combine to limit teachers in

their selections of novels to teach. Nevertheless, the trend seems to be in the direction of requiring more adolescent novels. In 1975 Hipple, Schullstrom, and Wright found only two books written for adolescents, <u>The Outsiders</u> and <u>The Pigman</u>, in the list of 40 most frequently required novels in the secondary schools. In her 1983 survey, Samuels adds eight more titles to these two.

Criticisms of adolescent novels--for example, that these novels are of inferior quality, set bad examples for developing tastes, lack depth of characterization, and so on--are often countered by claims that students are, in fact, reading these books. Advocates for the classroom use of adolescent novels argue that teachers can use them as stepping stones to more sophisticated literary works. But, whether or not teachers, within a semester or two, can develop literary sophistication through a program of increasing complexity and how they would use adolescent novels in such a program remain to be investigated. The minimum claim at this time is that reading adolescent literature can do no harm. Applebee (1978), in his careful and comprehensive research on children's responses to literature, reports:

> The patterns of development found in the present
> study certainly do not suggest that encounters
> with immature or juvenile literature are any
> less important, or any less educative, than later
> encounters with more sophisticated works. (p. 135)

And, even without empirical support, it is not unreasonable to assume that if students will read, from start to finish,

an adolescent novel, they are more likely than students who
have never read a novel, any novel, to become lifelong
readers whose reading habits change as their needs and
interests change.

Samuels (1983a) recommends "making young adult litera-
ture courses mandatory for new English teachers and available
on the graduate level for practicing teachers" (p. 39). She
believes that "teachers must learn to appreciate the growing
sophistication and popularity of young adult novels" and
that teachers should "incorporate them into their literature
programs" (p. 39). Nugent (1983), while sharing her experi-
ences teaching college adolescent literature, adds:

> To see juniors and seniors in college grappling
> with substantive ideas of man's confrontation
> with loss of innocence in such novels as <u>Roll
> of Thunder, Hear Me Cry</u> and <u>The Man Without a
> Face</u> is indication enough that this literature
> is worth studying. (p. 27)

Perhaps, as Nugent suggests, the significance of a
literary work resides in the ideas and insights it offers,
not necessarily in the audience that it appeals to. Teachers
of adolescents, in any case, should be aware of what their
students are reading outside of class and should consider
using some of the better adolescent novels in their classes.
To this end, college level courses on adolescent literature
and on the teaching of adolescent literature make good
sense.

How Should Literature Be Taught?

Recent research on how to teach literature has focused on student response, student reading ability, and student reading interests. Klemenz-Belgardt (1981), in a thorough review of American research on literature studies, reports:

> There is general agreement in all studies that all those teaching methods encouraging intensive discussions of the text and the literary response also advanced motivation, interpretation, and enjoyment of literature as a whole. . . . (p. 369)

This easily leads to the hypothesis, and the common sense notion, that however teachers choose to teach literature, their primary objective should be to involve students by eliciting class participation.

The educator and theorist of literature studies who first addressed the need to view classroom literary experiences as involving events--"transactions," as she called them--was Louise Rosenblatt. In _Literature as Exploration_ (1968), first published in 1938, she presents a theoretical foundation for literature instruction based on student response. She argues that the prerequisites to a proper teaching of literature entail an understanding of the social, psychological, and aesthetic elements of texts and an understanding of the social, psychological, and aesthetic nature of the students. "The teacher's task," she says, "is to foster fruitful interactions--or, more precisely, transactions--between individual readers and individual literary works" (pp. 26-27). Rosenblatt insists that the reader's

response to literature must be at the center of the litera-
ture curriculum. She says:

> Sound literary insight and esthetic judgment
> will never be taught by imposing from above
> notions of what works should ideally mean.
> Awareness of some of the things that actually
> affect the student's reactions will allow the
> teacher to help the students in handling his
> response and achieving increasing balanced
> literary experiences. (pp. 33-34)

Thus the teacher's concern is, first of all, with how the
students will and do respond to the text. As Odell and
Cooper (1976) claim, the teacher's "primary interest is no
longer in students' mastery of information (about historical
period, an author's life, a set of literary terms)" but is
rather "with the reactions, perceptions, interpretations,
and value judgments students make in response to a piece of
literature" (p. 203). Or, more poetically, the teacher
should focus on "the mind as it meets the book" (Purves,
1972).

Rosenblatt's transactional model of reading views the
text not as something "out there," but only as having import
when the author's presentation merges with the reader's past
experiences, prior knowledge, emotions, and expectations.
About the reader, she says:

> The verbal symbols enable him to draw on his
> past experiences with what the words point to
> in life and literature. The text presents
> these words in a new and unique pattern. Out
> of these he is enabled actually to mold a new
> experience, the literary work. (1966, p. 1000)

Another way of viewing these transactions is to think of
the text and the reader as two "aspects of a total situation,

each conditioned by and conditioning the other" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 17).

The notion of transactions between reader and text has stimulated and continues to stimulate an impressive number of empirical studies on reader response to literature. The most influential study, to date, on the articulation of response is the Purves-Rippere content analysis scheme of the written responses to literature by critics and students, first presented in <u>Elements of Writing About a Literary Work</u> (1968). Since amended by Purves and Beach (1972), it remains the one system of classification of response that is widely accepted and that is applied in other research. For instance, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) used 12 response categories of the Purves framework--Egocentric, Retelling, Emotional, Evaluation, Reference to Other Works, Generalization, among others--to measure student "thinking strategies for expressing their responses to literature" (1981, p. 33).

Research related to student response to literature has looked at students' reading interests (Purves & Beach, 1972), at such reader characteristics as age, sex, training, and cognitive development (Purves, 1973; Petrosky, 1975; Beach & Brunnetti, 1976; Galda, 1982a), at the role of the reader's attitudes, values, and personality (Bleich, 1971; Holland, 1975; Petrosky, 1976), at the effects of reading on attitudinal and behavioral changes toward minorities (Jackson, 1944; Page, 1977), and at the processes for formulating a

response (Odell & Cooper, 1976). After reviewing the literature, Beach (1979) concludes that "the general trend of the research suggests that the relatively stable and defined characteristics of readers shape the experience with a work to a greater extent than the work affects the characteristics of the reader" (p. 144). Thus, educators can, along with Klemenz-Belgardt (1981), assume that the more informed they are on who the student readers are and on how students respond to literature, the easier it will be to promote "willingness to read literature or insightfulness in reading" (p. 358).

Nevertheless, even with the wide acceptance of Rosenblatt's theory and with the corroborating research findings, Petrosky (1983) claims that

> there is a wealth of information showing that
> teachers have not taken advantage of response-
> centered instruction, the direct outgrowth of
> the transactional model of reading. For aca-
> demic students, high school literature
> instruction appears dominated by close analysis
> of texts in the style of college English. For
> general students, the emphasis is on literal
> recollection and summarization. It is not
> that these approaches to reading and litera-
> ture are unproductive, but they should not
> dominate instruction. (p. 80)

Indeed, the most recent NAEP (1981) report concludes "that while students learn to read a wide range of material, they develop very few skills for examining the nature of the ideas that they take away from their reading," and when the students do make interpretations, "they generally do not return to the passage to explain the interpretations they

made" (p. 2). Part of the reason for this, Petrosky (1983) explains, is that teachers "do not ask students for interpretations, explanations, points of view, opinions, and substantiations of the same" (p. 81). And this is, he continues to say, "probably because there is a paucity of instructional models, procedures, and suggestions for teaching within a transactional view of reading" (p. 81). Galda (1982b), however, says that "teachers can and do teach their students how to respond to literature" (p. 116). But what kinds of responses? How do teachers respond to literature in their classes and so, as models, instruct their students on how to respond? Results from the International Educational Achievement (IEA) study (Purves, 1981) positively correlate teacher response preferences with students' preferences.

If teachers respond in class to literature without returning to the texts to elucidate their interpretations, students, no doubt, will do the same. Opinionated involvement without text support is not enough for an understanding of an author's intent. Peters and Blues (1978) say that "the power and delight of intelligent reading" seem to depend upon "the teacher's ability to establish an attentive and open classroom climate with a high level of encouragement of widespread participation" (p. 135). This now seems evident. What remains to be determined is how teachers are to artfully combine both the author's ideas and the students' interests. As Galda (1982b) says:

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> Indeed, much of what we have learned about
> responses to literature tells us that our
> teaching practices and the kinds of responses
> our students make are inextricably bound.
> As we consider how we should assess our
> students' responses to literature we must
> also consider how we assess our teaching of
> literature. (p. 123)

Recent research underscores the need for investigations
of effective classroom practices for teaching literature.
And very little work has focused on the teacher's role in
the literature classroom. Yet, as noted above in Petrosky's
and Galda's comments, there is a growing need, as we learn
more about the abilities and potentials of student readers,
for a better understanding of how "teachers structure litera-
ture experiences for students" (Kantor, Kirby, & Goetz,
1981, p. 302).

The study which follows offers a substantive grounded
theory on how to teach literature. It looks at how one
college teacher structured literature experiences for his
students and at the social psychological processes of in-
volving students in a study of adolescent literature.
Generalization from such a case study is risky, at best;
but the methods for teaching literature that this study
elucidates are, I believe, worth serious consideration by
all who venture into the delights of sharing their love of
literature with their students.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

> We might, in a word, have a world of idea with-
> out a world of will. In this case, as completely
> as if consciousness were absent altogether, all
> value and excellence would be gone. So that for
> the existence of good in any form it is not
> merely consciousness but emotional consciousness
> that is needed. Observation will not do, appre-
> ciation is required.
>
> In appreciation, in preference, lies the root
> and essence of excellence.
>
> George Santayana
> The Sense of Beauty

Researchers and theorists agree that stimulating student
participation in the study of literature, through classroom
discussions and written work, increases student involvement
in a text which, in turn, increases literary understanding.
Much research is available on student response to literature.
But few empirical studies have looked at effective teaching
practices in the literature classroom. How do teachers
involve students in a study of literature? What is the
process of involving? How can the process of involving
students in a course on literature be investigated?

In her review of American empirical studies on response
to literature, Klemenz-Belgardt (1981) points out that

although the quantity of the research is impressive, serious deficits detract from its usefulness. The greatest deficit, she says, is the lack of strong theoretical foundations. She acknowledges that the "abstinence from metatheoretical discussions" has encouraged practical research but has like-wise severely limited its scope. Further, she argues that researchers have not adequately assessed their methodology to see if it is appropriate for the subject of study. Re-search on literature, she claims, remains tied to the existing paradigms, e.g., the Purves categories of response, and so prevents researchers from discovering new sources of data and theory. In particular, she is interested in moving research outside the educational tradition characterized by positivism and into an integration of present research with the ideas of literary scholarship.

The present study does not pretend to fulfill or com-plete such ambitions, but it does offer a new perspective on the teaching of literature, a perspective both grounded in empirical data and conducted without a predeveloped instru-ment or an overarching theory. Because the aim of this study is to develop a substantive theory on the teaching of literature, Klemenz-Belgardt's recommendations to reconsider the theoretical bases of research on response to literature and to seek a methodology appropriate to such research are heeded. Grounded theory methodology, as put forth by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978), employs sociological research procedures that permit, indeed encourage, the

fusion of empirical observations and theory generation. It
is a methodology new to research in the teaching of litera-
ture, one that, I believe, provides systematic strategies
for developing sound pedagogical theories on teaching
literature. And it is the methodology of this study.

What follows is an explanation of the processes of
generating a substantive grounded theory of teaching litera-
ture. The theoretical underpinnings of the procedures used
and a general description of them are presented. Addition-
ally, the methodology reflects a personal perspective on the
doing of educational research and conveys a preference for
viewing human activity through an aesthetic lens. The intent
of the investigation is to discover how a teacher and his
students find meaning in a literature classroom, a place
where artistic processes merit celebration.

Data Collection

Geertz (1973) explains his ventures into the study of
cultures as an interpretive science in search of meaning.
In this respect, he aligns himself with sociologist Max
Weber and portrays the human actor as "an animal suspended
in webs of significance he himself has spun" (p. 5). The
culture--broadly defined as the patterns of human behavior
in a specific social setting--of the present study was a
college adolescent literature classroom and the social inter-
actions that occurred within. In this setting, the teacher

was the web-spinner, the creator of meaningful transactions and of involving events. In this setting, I was the recorder of the transactions and events. Only much later did I turn to analysis and interpretation. This section discusses my techniques for recording the classroom proceedings and for gathering supplemental data, primarily interview material, for corroborating and elucidating the classroom data.

In such qualitative studies as the present one, the researcher's prior goals, assumptions, perspectives, and experiences are factors that, whether acknowledged or not, influence the focus and tenor of the recorded observations. This is not to say that the researcher enters the research setting with preconceived notions of what she will find. To the contrary, the absence of any theoretical presuppositions is highly recommended by practitioners of qualitative research in ethnographic studies (Burns, 1976; Rist, 1977; Wilson, 1977; Spradley, 1980; Spindler, 1982) and in social psychological explanations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Berger & Kellner, 1981). Erickson (1977) nevertheless warns:

> No setting, I would argue, "tells" anybody anything; no questions are generated directly from experience--there are no pure inductions. Research questions come from interaction between experience and some kind of theory, substantive or personal. (p. 62)

The primary research question of this study was how does a teacher achieve and maintain student involvement in the study of literature? And what Erickson says was true; I did

not go into the study a tabula rasa. Rather, I entered with the belief that the "effective" teacher of literature is a performer whose artistic traits and well-crafted routines can be discovered, explained, and taught to others. Further, as a teacher myself, I was both personally and professionally interested in strategies for involving students in literature. In effect, this study illustrates Max Weber's interpretive orientation to social research because it has, in part, been conducted in the "pursuit of self-knowledge" (Smith, 1983). Smith says, in his description of Weber's philosophy, that researchers are "ultimately seeking clarity about the meaning of their own conduct" (p. 7). Personal interest is often a key motive in the selection of the research setting.

The influence of personal interests on qualitative research is tempered by what Erickson (1973) calls "disciplined subjectivity" and what Weber (1949) calls "bracketing." By acknowledging and examining their own values and emotional responses and then by systematically suspending these during field work, researchers attempt to experience what the other participants in the social setting are experiencing, while maintaining a "dual identity" (Wax, 1971) of insider and outsider.

From the beginning of my observations, I identified more with the teacher than with the students. I focused on the teacher's expressions and behaviors and on his interaction with students. Seldom did I attend to any

student-student interaction that was not part of a class discussion, although I was aware, and the interview data also verify, that student alliances were being formed and that discreet messages about the teacher were being communicated among students during class. Early in the study I realized the extent of the teacher focus in the observations and my identification with the teacher. So, to prevent, as much as possible, the data from reflecting any us (the teacher and me)-them (the students) orientation on my part, no matter how subtle, I attempted to "bracket" my responses in two ways: I concentrated on recording verbatim material and on using the language of sense-experience (as opposed to emotional language or inferences) to describe behavior; and in the fieldnotes I literally put brackets around my personal insights, ideas, and reactions.

Identification with the subject of a study, however, can be immensely advantageous. In fact, one of the aims of qualitative research, as Smith (1983) says, is to understand how an individual or a group perceives a situation by re-creating "the experience of others within oneself" (p. 7). To do this in a thorough way, the researcher needs an almost artistic ability for combining a variety of data collection methods into coherent renderings of the dynamic interplay among places, actors, and events.

Perhaps the most outspoken proponent of sociological research as an art has been Geertz (1973). He describes sociological interpretations as "fictions, in the sense that

they are 'something made'" (p. 15). And he further views
such research as "an elaborate venture in, to borrow a
notion from Gilbert Ryle, 'thick description'" (p. 6). For
Geertz, thick description is, as Sanday (1979) explains,
"wading through clusters upon clusters of symbols by which
man confers significance upon his own experience" (p. 533).
Thus to arrive at a thick description, one must employ a
variety of modes for collecting data.

The use of multiple methods of observation Denzin (1978)
calls "triangulation." Triangulation is a corroborative
procedure that permits researchers to gain insights from
several sources and to check out the authenticity of the
renderings of the observed events. Denzin asserts that
triangulation "will raise sociologists above the personal-
istic biases that stem from single methodologies. By com-
bining methods . . . observers can partially overcome the
deficiencies that flow from one investigator or one method"
(p. 294).

Triangulation was employed in this study. The methods
used for data collection were participant observation and
informant interviewing. The data also include a gathering
of such artifacts as lesson plans, class handouts, student
evaluations, and audiotapes of all of the interviews with
the teacher and the students.

The setting of this study was an adolescent literature
class offered by the English department at a major south-
eastern university. The class met every Tuesday night from

7 to 10 pm for 16 weeks. Thirty-one students were present on the first night; twenty-seven completed the course. For all but seven students, the course was an elected one. The student population was a mix of upper division and graduate students: 5 juniors, 11 seniors, 9 graduate students, and 1 post-baccalaureate. Sixteen were education majors, 7 were in the college of arts and sciences, and 3 were in journalism. Nine of the students were experienced classroom teachers; two were student teachers. Seven had taken previous courses from the teacher. The teacher is a full professor experienced in both secondary and college teaching. He has written books and many journal articles on the teaching of English.

Students sat in individual desks in a single-file horseshoe around the walls of a large, carpeted room. At the opening of the horseshoe, a wooden table and a vinyl cushioned chair served as the teacher's headquarters. At the beginning of each class, the teacher or a student placed two large boxes filled with adolescent novels, the teacher's collection, in the center of the room near the wooden table. Before and after class and during the break, students looked over these books and often took one or two with them after signing their names under the book titles contained in a loose-leaf folder. During each class I sat in the horseshoe with the students and took fieldnotes. On two occasions I started and led the class discussion when the teacher was detained by prior engagements. On the first occasion I

explained in some detail about the study I was doing in and with this class.

The course requirements included a mid-term and a final examination. Both exams followed the same format: multiple-choice, true-false, matching, quotation identification, and short essay questions. Also, students were required to write a term paper on a topic of their own choosing in adolescent literature and had to annotate ten adolescent novels not included on the class syllabus. Additionally, all students were responsible for reading the same ten required novels. These novels were discussed in class and students were tested on them in the examinations.

At the end of the term I interviewed the teacher and ten students. All of the interviews were audiotaped. The interviews with the teacher took place in his office; interviews with the students took place in my office, with two exceptions--one was conducted at a student's home and the other in a student's classroom. The best research procedure would have been to interview all of the 27 students who completed the course. But the students' end-of-term schedules and my own made only ten interviews possible. The selection of students to interview, hence, was not a matter of choice or of random selection, but was a matter of mutual convenience. So, only in terms of time constraints can the student interview population be viewed as random. Even with these procedural defects, I nevertheless believe that I acquired a representative sample of the class. In fact,

one of the students interviewed was one who had plagiarized, word for word, her term paper from an old journal article and who had been discovered and punished prior to agreeing to be interviewed.

I began each interview with the students by briefly explaining my study and by asking them to tell me about their educational experiences and goals. Then I asked a series of questions that Spradley (1979) categorizes as descriptive, structural, and contrast. Of course, if a student comment suggested a fruitful, yet unplanned, direction of inquiry, I explored this.

Descriptive questions were intended to elicit the students' general perceptions of the situation. For instance, I always began with what Spradley calls a "grand tour" question: "Would you describe for me a typical evening in T's class?" The response to this question often determined the order of other questions and the emphasis of the interview. Early in the interview I would ask several structural questions, i.e., questions intended to elicit the student's particular vocabulary and conceptual framework of the experience. While responding to the grand tour question, for example, one student described the teacher as lecturing. The structural question I then asked was for her to explain what one of his lectures was like. She said, "the main thing I remember about his lectures are the little sidelights." Naturally, I asked her to tell me about "sidelights."

At some point in the interview I would ask a contrast question or two, i.e., questions that seek clarification on concepts, situations, or issues by asking students to make comparisons. For example, if a student had taken another literature course recently, I asked how the adolescent literature class differed from and was similar to that class. Such comparisons often prompted effusive comments about the class and teacher of this study. The least enthusiastic student I interviewed, a graduating English education major, responded to "Would you compare this class with another literature class?" with "Oh good heavens!" and explained that the class of this study was by far the best literature class she had taken.

I conducted two formal and several informal interviews with the teacher. The first formal interview followed a format similar to that of the student interviews. His response to the grand tour question suggested the remaining questions. He talked about the importance of teaching adolescent literature, about his teaching style, and about his educational philosophy and educational goals. Much later, when I was analyzing the data, this interview revealed to me the teacher's basic social psychological problem in the classroom--how to involve students in the class and in the literature.

Grounded Theory and Data Analysis

Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that their purpose in writing a book on methods of social research was to address the

> important enterprise of <u>how the discovery of
> theory from data--systematically obtained and
> analyzed in social research--can be furthered</u>.
> We believe that the discovery of theory from
> data--which we call <u>grounded theory</u>--is a
> major task confronting sociology today, for,
> as we shall try to show, such a theory fits
> empirical situations, and is understandable
> to sociologists and laymen alike. Most impor-
> tant, it works--provides us with relevant pre-
> dictions, explanations, interpretations and
> applications. (p. 1)

The data of this study were analyzed using guidelines sug-
gested in this book and in Glaser's (1978) later work. Also
Hutchinson's (1979/1980) summary of grounded theory
methodology and accounts of her work on developing a grounded
theory of rescue workers were immensely helpful throughout
the analysis process.

When collecting the data, my intention was to do an
ethnography--in Wilcox's (1982) sense of describing and
interpreting the nature of social discourse--of a college
adolescent literature classroom. However, during the ini-
tial analysis of the data, I discovered that the emerging
descriptive codes, i.e., concepts that describe phenomena
recorded in a line or sentence of the fieldnotes, when com-
pared to each other, suggested a social psychological process
of pedagogy rather than a static description of what had
happened in one classroom. I believed that the data had the

power to generate a formative theory on pedagogy. As such,
grounded theory methodology offered the appropriate strate-
gies for data analysis and theory formation.

Glaser (1978) says:

> grounded theory is a _detailed_ grounding by
> systematically analyzing data sentence by
> sentence by constant comparison as it is coded
> until a theory results. The result is that
> all data is [sic] conceptualized into cate-
> gories and integrated into a theory. Data is
> [sic] used to illustrate the resulting theory.
> (p. 16)

A theory emerges after the researcher has engaged in three
essential processes: open coding, memoing, and sorting.

Open Coding

Open coding, or what Glaser also calls "running the data
open" (p. 56), is the process of discovering what is going on
in the data without benefit of any theoretical control. By
fracturing the data into discrete incidents, coding permits
the analyst to move beyond the concrete to the more abstract
and generalizable concepts. The analyst begins with sub-
stantive codes, i.e., conceptualizations of the empirical
substance of the study, and concludes with the conceptual
codes that will constitute the elements of the theory itself.

The data are coded again and again until the conceptual
codes are "saturated," that is, until there is no new infor-
mation or new insights indicating other categories or over-
looked elements of the theory. The danger here, of course,
is that perhaps some analysts could indefinitely continue

to find new ways of conceptualizing and interpreting the data. Nevertheless, after several runs through the data, analysts can arrive at interesting, sound, useful theories. And although the resulting theories may not be as complete as they could be, analysts can publish their ideas, always reserving the right to modify, expand, and elaborate on the formative theories they have constructed.

Following the procedures of Glaser and Strauss, I coded my fieldnotes line by line. During the first run through the data, I generated over 120 categories of behavior and events. But in successive codings and through constant comparison of one category to another, I was able to subsume many categories under one concept, to discover subsumptive concepts for a group of related categories, and to eliminate many categories altogether. And in the process, encompassing and vivid concepts emerged.

The culminating task of coding is to discover concepts that are "analytic," i.e., "sufficiently generalized to designate characteristics of concrete entities, not the entities themselves," and that are also "sensitizing," i.e., "yield a 'meaningful' picture, abetted by apt illustrations that enable one to grasp the reference in terms of one's own experience" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 38-39). Usually only a very few analytic and sensitizing concepts are needed for a parsimonious theory. Such concepts have "fit" because they have grown out of the data and have "grab" because they are interesting.

The primary concepts of this study, those which emerged from open coding using the constant comparative method of grounded theory are acclimating, evoking, establishing rapport, staging, elucidating, and expressing purpose. This type of categorization belongs to what Glaser (1978) calls the "process coding family." Glaser says, "Processing refers to getting something done which takes time or something happening over time" (pp. 74-75). Gerunds, i.e., verbal nouns ending in "ing," are used in coding to indicate an on-going project. Indeed, the focus of this study was on process, the process of involving students in literature. Involving students happens over time and students become involved as a consequence of certain teacher behaviors that can be understood in terms of interrelated concepts.

Each primary concept or category has a chapter in this work which explains and illustrates its function in the overall project of involving students in literature. And in each chapter subcategories that describe the various types, dimensions, or conditions of the primary categories are presented to clarify the "hows," and sometimes the "whys," of each process.

Memoing

Glaser (1978) defines memos as "the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding" (p. 83). Memoing is the process

of writing whatever ideas the analyst has about a code, an incident in the data, counterexamples to an incident, the emerging theory, the relationship of the analyst's ideas with the ideas of others, and, in general, any note that may serve to clarify the concepts, to develop the theory, and to aid in writing the theory.

Memos are written by the analyst for the analyst. The analyst's purpose in memoing is not to produce deathless prose but is rather to capture, as quickly as possible, the ideas stimulated by the data. Also the analyst may use memoing to tease out a vague idea or simply to write in the hope of refreshing or restimulating his or her ideas at times when progress seems to be at a standstill or when thoughts seem to be inextricably mired.

During the open coding process I generated over 60 pages of type-written single-spaced memos. Each began with a heading that referred to a coding concept or to theoretical considerations. Some memos were a sentence or two, most were four or five sentences, and several took over a page.

In many ways memos are for the analyst almost as significant as the data itself. They require the analyst, because they are part of the methodology, to take time for reflection. And they provide a written record of the analyst's thoughts during the coding process. Not all memos, of course, are valuable in the final sorting of the data. But many memos, nevertheless, present the analyst with information and ideas for deciding which of the data is telling of the process and which is incidental.

Sorting

Sorting is the process of putting, as Glaser (1978) says,
"the fractured data back together"--data fractured by coding
and memoing--for the purpose "of setting up the memos in a
theoretical outline in preparation for the writing stage"
(p. 116). Sorting occurs after the major categories are
saturated, i.e., when no new major processes or subprocesses
are forthcoming, and continues throughout the writing of
the theory. From the sort the theory is integrated. Or,
to put it another way, "So goes the sort, so goes the paper
or book" (Glaser, 1978, p. 116).

The sort is a theoretical outline that grows out of
the analytical processes of increasingly refined coding and
continual memoing. These processes discover and substan-
tiate the major concepts; the sort organizes the major con-
cepts into an integrated theory.

In this study, the sort consisted of first determining
the primary and necessary processes, discovered in the
fieldnotes, for involving students in the course on adoles-
cent literature. I focused on arranging the major inter-
related concepts into an order conducive to a coherent
presentation. The various elements--e.g., conditions,
strategies, dimensions--of the major concepts I placed
under appropriate headings. I then developed an index
system for quickly finding the data and memos that illus-
trated or explained each major concept. I was ready to

begin writing the theory. But sorting, in particular re-
fining the elements of the major concepts, continued until
all parts of the theory were written.

Part II, which follows, explicates the theory. The
emphasis here is on a coherent presentation of the major
interrelated concepts--acclimating, evoking, establishing
rapport, staging, elucidating, expressing purpose--that are
used to describe the interactional and organizational be-
havior patterns of the teacher in his efforts to achieve
and maintain student involvement. From the outset, I stress
that this theory of involving, like all grounded theories,
simply and yet significantly "freezes the on-going for the
moment" (Glaser, 1978, p. 129); it is neither fixed nor
doctrinaire. Rather, in the interest of moving ever closer
to a comprehensive and concise explanation of the elements
of involving students in literature independent of context
and personality, I seek to present concepts of teacher be-
havior and intentions that are analytic and sensitizing and
yet are flexible enough to undergo modification as new
insights and evidence arise.

What I present is a theory in the sense that it explains
the variations in the behavior of a teacher of adolescent
literature and the variations in the students' reactions to
the teacher and to the literature in terms that transcend
the particulars of these people in this situation. It is
a theory explaining how students can be stimulated to

participate in a college literature class. The 25 students who completed the official university evaluation on this teacher unanimously rated the teacher "an outstanding and stimulating instructor." The student evaluation data support the conclusion that this teacher was an involving teacher, a teacher who created involving events for his students. But such data are by no means sufficient. Throughout the explication of the theory, data from the fieldnotes and the transcribed interviews are offered as further support. From these data a substantive grounded theory--a formative one--is generated on the process of involving students in a class on adolescent literature. It is quite likely that concepts other than the ones described and explained here can account for stimulating students to enjoy reading and to enjoy discussing literature. This theory, however, suggests one way, an effective way.

PART II

THE THEORY

CHAPTER THREE

INVOLVING

The mind is never passive; it is a perpetual
activity, delicate, receptive, responsive to
stimulus. You cannot postpone its life until
you have sharpened it. Whatever interest
attaches to your subject-matter must be
evoked here and now; whatever powers you are
strengthening in the pupil, must be exercised
here and now; whatever possibilities of
mental life your teaching should impart,
must be exhibited here and now. That is
the golden rule of education, and a very
difficult rule to follow.

Alfred North Whitehead
The Aims of Education

The concept of student involvement is used in educa-

tional literature as a catch-all phrase to refer to a variety

of positive responses by students to classroom activities.

Researchers in the past have attempted to devise ways of

assessing involvement (Morrison, 1927; Brueckner

& Ladenberg, 1933;   Ryans, 1960; Krauskopf, 1963;

Siegel et al., 1963). But they generally encountered prob-

lems of validity associated with assessing psychological

states by means of using visual scanning measures (Shannon,

1942) or through stimulated recall strategies with their

attendant difficulties of ad hoc self-report (Shavelson &

Stern, 1981). Today research on involving students in a

task is not pursued for its own sake; but sometimes involving appears as a variable in other studies, e.g., Peterson and Clark's (1978) work on teacher judgments, Blase's (1982) grounded theory on stress and teacher burnout, and Cooper's (1981) psycholinguistic study on the roles of a college instructor in an engineering class. The paucity of research on student involvement is somewhat suprising because, as Jackson (1968) says,

> . . . from a logical point of view, few topics
> would seem to have greater relevance for the
> teacher's work. Certainly no educational goals
> are more immediate than those that concern the
> establishment and maintenance of the student's
> absorption in the task at hand. Almost all
> other objectives are dependent for their accom-
> plishment upon the attainment of this basic
> condition. (p. 85)

A comprehensive picture of the complex causes, condi-
tions, consequences, and dimensions of student involvement
is needed. This study is but a beginning. It presents a
substantive grounded theory on the process of involving
students in a class on adolescent literature. But it has,
as will be discussed in the last chapter, implications for
the generation of a formal theory on student involvement.

The analysis of the data in this study led to the con-
clusion that the teacher who consistently creates involving
events in a literature classroom has many strategies at hand
for eliciting active student participation and for making his
interests and ideas attractive to students. [An "involving
event" refers to descriptors both overt and tacit: The
teacher and students appear to be mutually engaged in an

activity of high interest to both, and the teacher and
students perceive that they are sharing and experiencing a
similar degree of absorption in the activity. The teacher
instigates and perpetuates involving events through a
command of the forces of reciprocity and recursiveness.⌉
He is aided by a repertoire of accumulated routines and by
a cultivated proficiency of knowing when to push a routine,
to back off from it, to amend it, and to wing it. Further,
he is guided by a sense of mission, of knowing what messages
he wants to impart to students; that is, what attitudes and
knowledge he wants them to leave with and to impart to
others. Thus "involving," the core concept and the basic
social psychological process in this study, explains the
variations in the behavior of a teacher who succeeds in
creating reciprocally absorbing events in recursive patterns.

   "Reciprocity" and "recursiveness" are notions that
characterize the ways in which the six subprocesses of in-
volving are expressed and executed by the teacher. They are
forces, in the sense of having the power to maintain and
increase student interest, that seem to be simultaneously
within and beyond the teacher's control. Both, however, are
defining characteristics of involving events and, as such,
require explication.

Reciprocity

   Reciprocity is the necessary, although not sufficient,
condition for involvement. It is the force which binds

students to a teacher and a teacher to students and, so, creates interactions that are seen as mutually beneficial. The teacher, by virtue of his leadership position, is responsible for planning and directing classroom events that students and teacher alike can describe as reciprocally involving. Nevertheless, without frequent signals that students are "with" the teacher, i.e., are following along and are interested, the teacher soon silently despairs and perhaps sees his performance as "flat," as lacking luster and incapable of generating enthusiasm. The involving teacher--although aware that such extenuating circumstances as physical and emotional conditions, political and social atmosphere, and sometimes just "something in the air" can affect a class--works at keeping the force of reciprocity within his grasp. For instance, the teacher of this study said that he could "manufacture enthusiasm" at times when he was not feeling very enthusiastic about the material or was not feeling like teaching a class. When I asked him how he did this, he responded:

> Oh, you go in there and you get caught up in the notion that people are looking at you; they're listening to you; they're writing down things that you're saying or they appear to be. They may be writing love letters or grocery lists or whatever. You get kind of caught up in the total ambience of the experience. That tends to provide an energizing effect. For me at least, it's --I don't know what word to use--it's neat, it's exciting, it's self-fulfilling/self-perpetuating. I'm at this level of enthusiasm. The class is responding and that can bump me up to this level of enthusiasm [hand gestures indicating ascending steps].

On the other hand, without a teacher show of enthusiasm students soon drift off and may, if they are not self-stimulating or already motivated, doubt the worth of the course or subject. For example, one student described another literature class in this way:

> I have a poetry class right now. He's [the teacher] knowledgeable and all that. Maybe it's the subject matter. I love poetry but it's just the way we go about doing it. He'll read the poem. Then we talk about the poem and that's it. Then we move on to something else. And it's just like that everyday and there's no excitement, no input by the students . . . like we don't discuss that much. We don't talk. I could get by without going and probably pass the tests. . . . He seems to be the one who wants to know everything in the class. . . . What you have to say really doesn't matter that much.

Later in the same interview, I asked the student if she could think of one word or phrase that described the adolescent literature class. She said "a shotgun." I asked her to explain. She said:

> When I went into that class . . . he handed us this list of things to read and I'm going [she points a finger to her temple and makes a sound like a gun firing]. Just blew my mind. And then it diminished, like we took one thing at a time. We got into it and . . . the farther we went, the more we got into, the better it got. . . . It just set something off up here [again pointing to her temple]. I just never dreamed that that class would do me that much good. . . . It triggered something. Just my whole idea of what the classroom is really like, because I was frightened to become a teacher. . . . If I knew I'd could teach the way he teaches, I think I'd be [giggles] a good teacher. I think I would.

Involving is a reciprocal process that is within the teacher's control when the teacher intentionally seeks to

demonstrate his interests in a subject and in the students, even to the point of manufacturing enthusiasm. The immediate reward for the teacher is the students' instant return of enthusiasm. This return "bumps up" the teacher to a higher level of enthusiasm and to an increased--and pleasant-- feeling of communicating with students who are interested and of being heard and appreciated by students who care about what is going on. In sum, reciprocity is an interactional force that teachers engender by directing their words and actions toward receiving a show of enthusiasm from their students.

Recursiveness

Recursiveness describes the cognitive process of pattern- ing the various strategies and routines used in involving students in literature over time. Teachers do not--in fact, cannot because of the constraints placed on them by con- stantly changing events in the classroom--direct their classes in the linear fashion that lesson plans suggest. Rather, they start with a plan and with set routines and then proceed to overlay these on a group of individuals who may have other ideas and interests. The effect of the over- laying process can rarely be forecast in detail although, based on prior experience, valued outcomes can be expected. Hence, the involving teacher has an available reservoir of "heuristics" for dealing with classroom contingencies and,

at the same time, for keeping valued outcomes on track.
Shavelson and Stern (1981) describe "heuristics" as "im-
plicit rules that people are unaware of and use in complex
tasks in order to select information, classify objects or
persons, or revise their knowledge" (p. 469). Among these
heuristics is the force of recursiveness which permits the
teacher to know--without consciously having to recall--when
to speak, when to act, when to listen.

Rubin (1983) describes what I am calling recursiveness
in this way:

> As every record collector will testify, a worn-
> out Chicago Symphony recording of the Bartok
> "Concerto" cannot be replaced with a new one by
> the New York Philharmonic, no matter how good,
> because it is the particular interpretation that
> charms and delights us. The same is true in
> teaching: a masterly lesson may be attributable
> to the teacher's lucid explanation, sensitive
> pacing, or adeptness in sustaining learner
> attention. (p. 49)

Recursiveness is the teacher's intuitive sense of
patterning the various elements in his classroom performance
from expressing expectations for the class to presenting the
ideas of others. It is a heuristic process that the teacher
is not often consciously aware of; and so, how he goes about
responding to the contingencies of the moment is not within
his immediate control. But he does have control to the
extent that he has spent time reflecting on his classroom
behavior and on refining and improving his strategies for
interacting with students. Thus recursiveness is a force
that teachers harness after much experience reflecting on

ways to involve students and that teachers harness during

continuous implementation of the positive decisions resulting

from these deliberations. Eisner (1983) says:

> What skilled teaching requires is the ability
> to recognize dynamic patterns, to grasp their
> meanings, and the ingenuity to invent ways to
> respond to them. It requires the ability to
> both lose oneself in the act and at the same
> time maintain subsidiary awareness of what one
> is doing. Simply possessing a set of discrete
> skills ensures nothing. (p. 9)

No, of course not; proficiency in recursiveness is required.

The involving teacher knows how to move the students

from one activity to another without a break in the continu-

ity of the overall lesson and principal objectives. He may

see that students are not attending to a way in which he is

presenting a certain lesson and decide on the spot to change

his manner of presentation or to move on to something else,

only to return at a later time to his initial message. He

is not tied to his plans; rather, he is alert to student

response or lack of response. The key to being proficient

in recursiveness is attending to student response to class-

room events. Creating reciprocally absorbing events in the

classroom requires the ability to pattern events so that

student interest remains high.

Together reciprocity and recursiveness function to

unify the involving teacher's messages and style. The

involving teacher actively seeks student attention and

participation knowing that only under these conditions will

his messages be heeded. The teacher of this study employed six major interrelated subprocesses for involving--which is the core process--students in the class and the literature: acclimating, evoking, establishing rapport, staging, eluci- dating, expressing purpose. And although none of these stand alone, I separately discuss and illustrate each subprocess in the following six chapters.

Many examples of classroom events illustrating the reciprocal and recursive nature of this teacher's performances are presented in the following chapters. In the verbatim material of the excerpts from the fieldnotes and the tran- scribed interviews, I use slashes ("/"), rather than other punctuation marks, to indicate pauses in speech. The reason for this type of notation is to avoid adding my own inter- pretation of the speech of others by punctuating their speech where I think it makes sense. More than one slash indicates a pause of a second or longer.

CHAPTER FOUR

ACCLIMATING

There are some enterprises in which a careful
disorderliness is the true method.

Herman Melville
Moby Dick

Acclimating is the subprocess of involving that adapts
students to the classroom environment and orients students
to the teacher's expectations. Acclimating routines focus
on matters of class procedure and on matters of class
etiquette. Here the teacher's social psychological problems
are how to insure that students understand the course re-
quirements and the teacher's preferred instructional modes
and how to insure that students comply with the practices
that the teacher has designated as beneficial, desirable,
and appropriate. The involving teacher tempers the demand
of student compliance with course requirements by concur-
rently making subtle, but continual, suggestions on how
students can comfortably fit into and enjoy the class. The
two primary strategies of the acclimating subprocess are
shaping patterns of classroom interaction and explaining
requirements. Acclimating, like the other five subprocesses
of involving, is instrumental in guaranteeing that classes
result in reciprocally absorbing events.

Shaping Patterns of Classroom Interaction

Established patterns of classroom interaction benefit
both teacher and students. Elbe (1976) claims that "defining
a class at the outset" is essential for providing "an easy
transition from the student's real world to the artificial
world of the classroom" (p. 34). Jackson (1968) notes:
"Learning to live in a classroom involves, among other
things, learning to live in a crowd" (p. 10). In an ethno-
graphic study of an elementary school classroom, Janesick
(1978) reports on the importance of establishing a "sense
of groupness"; in a similar study Florio (1979) records the
benefits of developing a "sense of community." Taking the
ethical point of view, Greene (1973) says that the "teacher
who wishes to be more than a functionary cannot escape the
value problem" of engaging in, whether he wants to or not,
"a process of perpetuating and remaking a distinctive way
of life" (p. 181). Hence, to make the crowded world of the
classroom into a cohesive community devoted to pursuing and
perpetuating mutual values, the involving teacher consciously
shapes student-student interaction and student-teacher
interaction--i.e., the transactions among the class parti-
cipants--into patterns that he deems appropriate and desir-
able. Two teacher techniques for shaping patterns of
classroom interaction are (1) to impose a set design on the
class flow of activities, a design that fits the subject
of the course, and (2) to establish dominance through such
heuristics as attribution and modeling.

Class Design

The basic format of each class in this study included
the following activities: opener, shared readings, review,
discussion of assigned novel, assignment giving, and farewell.
On three occasions small group activities were incorporated.
Because openers, shared readings, and small group activities
are not usual components of a college literature classroom,
a brief description of each is presented below.

Openers are a way of getting the class started. They
may or may not require active student participation. One
evening, for instance, the teacher began by reading Shel
Silverstein's "Sara Cynthia Sylvia Stout Would Not Take the
Garbage Out." On another evening he began with a word game,
and on yet another he read from several books of humorous
quotes and then asked students to share their favorite quotes.
Openers, because they are entertaining and nonthreatening,
function to relax both teacher and students.

The teacher introduced openers the second evening of
class: "Quite frequently I'll do something at the beginning
of class that I call/ for want of a better word/ I call
openers." Then he introduced and read a short story from
an anthology that he edited. Openers for this teacher were
more than "warm-ups" because they did not usually lead into
the evening's planned topic and were more than "ice-breakers"
because they were not simply social activities but rather
involved word play and other types of language aesthetics.

Not incidentally, openers also presented this teacher with
the opportunity to share some of his interests and talents
that otherwise may not have found a place in the course.

"Shared readings" refers to the segment of this class
in which students told each other about the adolescent novels
they had recently read. The teacher usually began with the
question: "What'd you read this week?" Typically students
responded by giving descriptive or evaluative responses to
novels followed by comments by the teacher on the book,
author, other books by the same author, or ways students
could use the novel. The teacher did not establish a format
for responding to the books although on several occasions
he prevented students from either giving away the plot or
boring the class with too thorough an account. For example:

> J begins telling the plot. T interrupts with
> "Not too much more than that." J goes on: "It
> was kind of an enjoyable book." T responds:
> "That's a good topic for a paper for you// Why
> is it that most teachers in adolescent novels
> are English teachers?" He expands on this.
> "And you might want to do a paper on that//
> Yeah, R." R, smiling, reports that he liked
> <u>Such Nice People</u>. T responds with a personal
> anecdote.

In an interview, the teacher stated the purposes of the
shared readings as follows:

> To give people some involvement/ to let them have
> a chance to talk/ to find out who is doing some
> reading// to give people who feel/ that they
> don't have a whole lot to say maybe about what-
> ever the book of the evening is/ perhaps they
> haven't read it/ perhaps they're not excited
> about it/ something to still participate/ broaden
> the spectrum of participation/// the number of
> those who participate.

These sessions usually lasted 10 to 15 minutes with all of
the students who wanted to share their readings given the
chance to do so. Many of the books reported on came from
the teacher's book boxes and most were included in the stu-
dents' annotations of outside readings.

Small group activities, which occupied the last half of
three class sessions, gave students the opportunity to dis-
cuss assigned readings among themselves, unguided by teacher
influence or teacher interests. These activities served
both a social and a problem-solving function. When I asked
one student what she thought about the small group activities,
she described them as "helpful." When I asked her to explain
in what ways they were helpful, she replied:

> Well/ two ways/ one the fact that we didn't get
> with the same people every time and I really liked
> the ways/ it was really creative the ways that he
> came up with grouping people// birthdates/ that
> was really interesting// and the other thing was
> it's smaller/ and you don't have time/ with 30
> people as an entire group to say "what do you
> think/ what do you think"/ with a small group you
> can get more in-depth or something.

In the small groups students got to know each other in a
"free-wheeling" yet structured arrangement. The teacher's
role was to explain the task to be completed (e.g., to evalu-
ate three previously assigned short stories using eight
criteria for evaluating literature), to require that each
group pick a person who would record the proceedings and
would later join a panel that reported the high points of
each group's discussion, to place students in groups of five

or six, and to set time limits on the group work. Addition-
ally, the teacher served as the informal panel moderator.

Student interviews reveal that not all members of the
class thought that these activities were beneficial, although
students were reluctant to criticize the teacher for their
dissatisfactions. One student said that she felt stifled in
one of the group sessions because another member caused her
not to "feel free to express my opinion on the book."
Another student felt that the small groups were time ineffi-
cient. Yet another felt that there was not enough time
allowed for the small groups to discuss the novels or cri-
teria, but thought that the panels were unnecessary and
boring. All together, however, the small group activities
were favorably received by the students interviewed primarily,
it seems, because of the social nature of small group inter-
action.

Establishing Dominance

> Good and Brophy (1978) claim that
>
> the most important determinant of classroom
> atmosphere is the teacher's method of classroom
> management, especially his or her techniques
> for keeping the class actively attentive to
> lessons and involved in productive independent
> activities. (p. 165)

These writers, because they are looking at pre-college class-
rooms, focus on "preventing problems" through various
strategies of classroom management. On the college level,
however, acclimating students to teacher expectations is the

crucial factor for managing a smooth running classroom.
Students who come to class prepared and eager, or at least
willing, to participate are essential to class sessions that
students and teacher alike perceive as worthwhile. The in-
volving teacher's tasks are to promote student preparedness,
to encourage student participation, and to direct classroom
interaction. The teacher's ability to elicit student coopera-
tion and compliance is contingent upon his early success in
establishing dominance.

During the second class, the teacher of this study
announced his dominance in this fashion:

> T gives a brief review of last week's proceedings.
> Silence. T looks around. Referring to the
> syllabus he asks: "Can you live with it?"
> Silence. He jokes about Catcher in the Rye
> already having been read. He explains that they
> really won't need to have it read for several
> weeks but to go ahead and get started because
> later on the literature will start piling up.
> "You're going to enjoy the course more/ and
> I'm going to enjoy it more/ and my enjoyment
> is paramount. . . . When it comes between mine
> and the students' . . . [I win out]."

Announcing dominance, as this excerpt demonstrates, need not
be an entirely serious undertaking; rather, such pronounce-
ments can be cushioned with humor. Here, accompanied by
student laughter, the teacher lays claim to class leadership.
Further, he lets the students know that he expects pre-
paredness, that in fact his happiness in class depends upon
their preparedness, and that his happiness is the sine qua
non of a successful class.

Of course, one announcement does not establish dominance.
Among other techniques, establishing dominance can include

the frequent use of such heuristics as teacher attribution
and teacher modeling. Attribution and modeling are comple-
mentary processes that follow the implicit rule: Label
desirable behaviors when they are exhibited by students or
when they are to be demonstrated by the teacher. The teacher
is both the one who attributes and the one who models. For
instance, in this study the teacher informs students that he
will be asking questions to which he expects responses,
that he will wait for responses, and that he will discourage
students from always talking directly to him.

> "Two comments about the way I teach// These may
> seem self-serving." First he talks about his
> uses of wait-time, which he prefers to call "the
> art of silence." He begins his second comment
> about the way he teaches: "I'm well aware that
> I'm the great grade giver in the sky." He talks
> about the room arrangement, the desks placed in
> a single-file horseshoe around the walls. He
> explains his reason for preferring this arrange-
> ment. "Let's not make everything funneled
> through me and to me// One way is to talk to
> each other. . . . If suddenly you're talking
> and I'm not looking at you. . . . I'm tying my
> shoes or picking my nose. . . . If it bothers
> you that I'm not looking at you when you're
> talking// too bad// maybe you'll look at some-
> body else."

This teacher shaped classroom interaction by explicitly re-
vealing his strategies and then by acting in accordance with
his stated methods. As Harris (1983) says:

> The use of instructions to explain what will be
> demonstrated helps the student focus attention
> appropriately. And when the process being
> modeled is complex or abstract, we can assist
> students to learn as we model by commenting on
> the more important features of our behavior or
> the general principles at work. (p. 81)

The instance from the fieldnotes above focuses on attributing and on modeling patterns of social interaction. Teacher modeling of general principles for reading and interpreting novels was also evident in this study. For example, the teacher frequently read from the novel itself when interpreting, describing, or evaluating a portion or an aspect of the novel. He, in turn, encouraged students to give specific examples from the text when commenting on a novel, and they often did. An excerpt from the class session on Guest's Ordinary People shows a student reading from the novel and also shows the teacher's use of silence. But more significantly, this passage clearly illustrates the high level of student participation that resulted from the teacher's intentional shaping of the patterns of classroom interaction.

> T says, "Speak to me of Beth." D responds,
> "Most interesting character I've run across in
> a long time." She comments further, then asks
> T a question. He shrugs with palms open but
> remains silent. C and R start to speak at the
> same time. C goes on to speak. Then Y speaks.
> While she is talking three or four other
> students appear to want to talk. H comments
> and T responds to his remark. They discuss how
> Beth handled discovering at a party that Con
> had quit the swimming team. S speaks, then
> another female. T responds to K's comment:
> "Good line there/ literature often succeeds not
> because of what it says/ but what it doesn't
> say." T says that he discovers something new
> on each reading of Ordinary People. He refers
> the students to and reads a passage from page
> 64. He asks, "What else was in bad taste?/
> [low voice] committing suicide/ especially by
> slitting his wrists . . . having the tile re-
> grouted. . . . I think that's good/ she doesn't
> answer." S refers to and reads the blood
> passage. T expands on this.

The processes of implementing a class design and of establishing dominance are effective strategies for shaping patterns of energetic student-student and teacher-student interaction.

Explaining Requirements

Another necessary process for effective acclimation is explaining requirements. In The Art of Teaching (1950) Highet writes:

> One of the chief aids to learning is the sense of purpose. One of its chief aims it to develop the structural faculty, which in intellectual matters shows itself as foresight and co-ordination, and in art gives the appreciation of harmony and the power to create it. The teacher should have all these in view as he prepares his work. By example and by practice, he can show the young that it is a weakness to live from day to day, and that accumulation and planning mean strength.

> The best way to do this is to plan all the work which the class will do, to explain the plan to them, to make sure that they keep it in mind, and, after the work has been completed, to look back over it and sum it up. (p. 69)

Despite Highet's Horatio Alger-like sentiments, this quote speaks to the frequent need to keep the expected student products and the students' progress toward these ends in front of the students' eyes, including adult students. In The Craft of Teaching (1976), Elbe entitles one of his sections "Grubby Stuff and Dirty Work." In these chapters he discusses textbooks, assignments, tests, grades, and other less than pleasant topics like cheating and student

accusations. And Elbe is right; the constant need to explain requirements can be grubby stuff. But it need not altogether be.

Explaining requirements accounts for the greater proportion of acclimating instances in the protocols of this study. This process began on the first evening and ended on the night of the final examination. The form of the explanations included making assignments, answering student questions about weekly assignments and course requirements, reminding students about requirements, referring to requirements or various ways of carrying out requirements as an aside during the lessons, and in general ascertaining as much as possible that students understood the assignments and requirements and the ways in which these would be evaluated. Below are several examples of how the teacher of this study explained requirements:

> From his book bag T pulls out file folders cut in half and several magic markers. He explains that we are to put our names on the manilla folders and hang them on our desks because, he says, he doesn't remember names very well.

> * * *

> Dismissing the panel, T says: "OK/ thank you very much. . . . Let me make a couple of comments" on why he put the students in small groups to discuss these short stories in terms of his eight criteria for evaluating literature. He wanted them to become familiar with the criteria.

> * * *

> "Tonight we're going to see how a good novel admits of many interpretations." He asks students to list the names: Finny, Gene, Leper, and Brinker. "After each one write down a

couple or three things . . . that relate to
these guys. . . ."

* * *

T mentions again about the holistic grading of
their term papers. He reminds them that their
papers are due April 6 and says: "It will screw
everything up if you don't get them done by then//
we can't get copies made or do whatever we want
to do." P asks if the paper is to be an opinion.
He advises her to support whatever she says with
the dictum: "Go to the book."

* * *

After handing back the mid-term examination, T
says: "All told/ I'm really proud of you// I'm
more proud of you than I am of the test. . . . It
foreshadows the final/ if I may [laughter--the
week before the uses of foreshadowing in litera-
ture had been discussed]. . . . Questions about
the final? . . . Material for the final starts
tonight."

* * *

"Other questions?/// Do have the paper done by-"
Two or three people call out: "By April 6th."

* * *

He makes next week's assignment first in case,
he says, he forgets it. He then mentions the big
paper. "For the one or two of you who are not
yet finished/ you can ask a question that may
benefit the other one or two of you who are not
yet finished."

* * *

"Couple of things prior to next week . . . return
the books that belong to me. . . . If you must
have [he names a book] by all means keep it//
but give me two in return."

* * *

"Finally/ there's no easy way for me to say
this/ I just badly screwed up// I forgot to make
up the final exam/ no no." Instead, he explains
that "someone in here called up" another depart-
ment complaining about the final for this course

being given during "dead week." Through a
coincidence he received the message. He says
that he knows about the policy, and should since
it's been around for a long time, but he didn't
think about it when making up the course
schedule. "It's just inexcusable/ I have no
apology at all/ except lack of foresight." He
offers students the opportunity to take the same
exam during finals' week. Only one student
starts to leave, but he sits back down and takes
the exam with the rest of the class.

In this chapter acclimating is viewed as a deliberate
process for insuring that students comply with the course
requirements. And further, it is the process of encouraging
students to perform and participate in ways that the teacher
has previously determined will result in both students and
himself receiving the most benefit from the materials and
from the class time. With design, dispatch, and humor, the
involving teacher acclimates students to his expectations.
The goal is to involve students in the course. Consequently,
acclimating is a vital subprocess of involving and is a
prerequisite for the successful completion of the other five
subprocesses.

CHAPTER FIVE

EVOKING

Glendower: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
Hotspur: Why, so can I, or so can any man;
           But will they come when you do call for them?

William Shakespeare
Henry IV, Part I

Anyone, like Glendower, can summon students to listen and learn. Summoning, however, is one thing. Getting and directing student attention is quite another and is, without a doubt, the first step in teaching, whether it is teaching students how to read a novel or how to parse a phrase.

Evoking is the subprocess of involving that obtains, maintains, and directs student attention. Through this process the teacher is attempting to solve the social psychological problem of how to captivate an audience, of how to turn students away from their other concerns and turn their thoughts toward anticipating the class events. Initially, evoking functions to focus student attention on the teacher. And its repetition keeps students alert and responsive to designated classroom activities. In effect, the teacher first attracts students to himself by presenting himself as an interesting individual who also happens to be skilled in,

say, the understanding and interpretation of literature. The teacher then invites students to speak up, to present themselves, and to engage each other. Students are called forth and, if the teacher is adept in the evocative arts, they enthusiastically respond.

To be sure, evoking is a motivational process which operates on the assumption that, as Gagné (1965) says, "some state internal to the learner, which functions as a precondition of the events of learning themselves, needs to be established and maintained" (p. 206). Evoking is a two-step recursive process that integrates the elements of attracting students to the person and interests of the teacher and of inviting students to engage in the teacher's interests with him. Thus, the primary evocative strategies in this study are attracting and inviting. Together these strategies describe teacher behaviors that contribute to a teacher's abilities to establish and maintain that "state internal" which we call student attention.

Attracting

One student, with some trouble articulating her impressions but with much conviction, described the teacher of this study in this way:

> I think just his attitude in general/ the way
> he presents himself/ people want to learn// just
> from when he comes in the classroom/ at the
> beginning of class/ . . . people say let's start
> thinking/ you know/ or something// I don't know
> what it is/ it's weird.

Illich (1971) says that the most important question for educational planners to consider is "What kinds of things and people might learners want to be in contact with in order to learn" (p. 111)? What students get from a course of study, or from an "educational network" to use Illich's terms, is often largely contingent upon the interests, enthusiasm, scholarship, among other things, that the teacher brings to the learning environment. Hipple (1969) says:

> If your students can come to see you as a person with many interests, then possibly they can come to recognize your field as one you deliberately selected from among these many interests and can believe that the least they can do is to attend to what you say about the subject in the hope that they can see why it holds such excitement for a person like you. (p. 248)

In other words, a crucial factor in classroom learning, and in teaching well, is that students find the teacher interesting to listen to and to watch.

Attracting is the process of getting attention through appearance and manner. It is the desired result of what Goffman, in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959), calls "expressions given off." As such, attracting is a performance of "the more theatrical and contextual kind, the non-verbal, presumably unintentional kind, whether this communication be purposely engineered or not" (Goffman, p. 4).

In one interview a student, referring to a doodle he made representing the class as a cabaret, acknowledged the importance of both appearance and manner:

What I'm talking about is that picture I drew
with the hat and cane// it's supposed to repre-
sent that not only is he a physically sort of an
energetic person/ but also he's/ mentally
stimulating/ he's mentally always moving around//
his imagination is like a tap dance/ it's inter-
esting/ it's flowing/ it always keeps you
interested.

Less metaphorically, another student said:

He's just very enhtusiastic in his whole method
of teaching/ he's so excited about it/ and of
course that adds to the attention span of the
students// definitely.

In light of such descriptions, attracting encompasses
the two different, but interrelated, dimensions of appearance
and manner, i.e., the sheer physical presence of the teacher
including movement in the classroom or the lack of it and
the attitudes displayed by the teacher through facial expres-
sions, intonation, and posture. These interrelated sets of
characteristics make up what Goffman terms the person's
"front," i.e., "the expressive equipment of a standard kind
intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual
during his performance" (p. 22).

It is expressive equipment of the intentional kind on
which this section focuses, for here are some factors that
can inform the judgments of teachers and of teacher educators.
Because, however, teacher educators sometimes find that shy,
pedantic intellectuals remain just that even when teaching,
they may infer that such attributes as enthusiasm and
cordiality and even the less touted sense of self-importance
cannot be intentionally developed. They defer, on such
matters, to the determinants of past influences and desires.

But, to the contrary, Goffman insists that in everyday situations not only can the impressions others receive be managed by the performer but in fact usually

> . . . the very obligation and profitability of appearing always in a steady moral light, of being a socialized character, forces one to be the sort of person who is practiced in the ways of the stage. (p. 251)

And more pertinent to teacher behavior, Goffman comments:

> What does seem to be required of the individual is that he learn enough pieces of expression to be able to "fill in" and manage, more or less, any part that he is likely to be given. The legitimate performances of everyday life are not "acted" or "put on" in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have. The expressions it is felt he is giving off will be especially "inaccessible" to him. But as in the case of less legitimate performers, the incapacity of the ordinary individual to formulate in advance the movements of his eyes and body does not mean that he will not express himself through these devices in a way that is dramatized and pre-formed in his repertoire of actions. In short, we all act better than we know how. (pp. 73-74)

The primary repertoire of actions for managing impressions that contributed to the overall ability of the teacher in this study to attract student attention can be headed under four categories: relaxing others, moving around, legitimizing dominance, and generating enthusiasm. All four categories entail a complex interweaving of the two dimensions of attracting--the teacher's physical presence and the teacher's display of attitudes.

Relaxing Others

"The great enigma of teaching," Webb (1981) points out, "is that people enter the profession in order to work closely with the young and in the course of their work progressively distance themselves from their students" (p. 244). He cites protection from hurt and the need to maintain authority among the reasons for social distance between the teacher and students. This social distance, however, must be lessened if a genuine sharing of ideas is a goal of interaction. Efforts to relax others is one means for developing an atmosphere of trust in the classroom. Friendly gestures, uses of humor, and reassurances that student questions and comments will not be ridiculed all aid in relaxing others. Through these types of teacher behaviors, the social distance that reduces the likelihood of an open discussion of ideas can be diminished.

The teacher of this study, as discussed in the last chapter, began each class with an "opener," e.g., reading a poem or playing a word game. These he included in the class design largely for the purpose of relaxing students and perhaps himself. Also early in each class he teased individuals or the class as a whole and he often made himself the subject of humor. In the interview he stated:

> It's very important for me to have laughter in
> the classroom/ it really is/ so I will work to
> get that/ even at the point of belittling myself/
> making a fool of myself// it doesn't much bother
> me to do that//

In making himself the subject of humor, for instance, he told the class something about teaching in 1957 and then commented: "I know you didn't know I'd been teaching that long// I started when I was nine." When telling the class that he was not altogether pleased with the title of an anthology of short stories he edited and was using as one of the class texts, he said: "I wanted to call it Gone With the Wind/ but the publisher wouldn't let me."

Other instances of his use of humor are

> T puts a phone number on the board. As students begin writing it down, he says--laughingly--that it isn't really his phone number and jokes about starting off with a messy notebook. He gives his correct office and home phone numbers and tells us not to call after 12. He corrects this to 11, joking about getting older.

> * * *

> "Tonight/ the grand show for tonight . . . and I apologize for this. . . . The good news and the bad news/ the bad news is I'm going to be talking all night/ and that's the good news too." T quickly starts into the history of adolescent literature.

One student, speaking for herself and her classmates, said:

> We knew we weren't going to be shot down if we had something really far-fetched or a question that was really way out// we felt open about expressing it.

This teacher's friendly manner and his frequent ad libs, one-liners, and other uses of humor contributed to the comfortable atmosphere in this classroom. Yet certain unexpected turns of phrase and their complementary facial expressions and bodily postures as much as anything contributed to the

alertness and relaxation the students in this class exhibited.
One student said, "I looked forward to the class because I
never knew what to expect."

Moving Around

High physical energy exhibited by varied, perhaps even
exaggerated, movements helps to rivet student attention on
the teacher. As one student noted, the teacher of this study
is

> an interesting person to watch// if you go to
> class and you go and you can't hear and you're
> deaf and you wear earmuffs/ you could probably
> not look bored just watching T.

Moving around is to the eyes, and perhaps even to kinesthetic
sensation, what verbal humor is to the ears. Or, at least,
there is a close analogy. Both moving around and relaxing
others keep the audience alert, interested, involved in each
act and eager for the next. Note the following examples of
moving around:

> T talks about Agatha Christie's novels. Using
> one of them as an example of foreshadowing, he
> acts it out. He walks to the far side of the
> room and back again. All eyes appear to be
> following him. He uses the center of the circle
> of desks as the stage. Then he returns to his
> headquarters.

<p align="center">* * *</p>

> While talking about Louisa May Alcott, he moves
> from behind the table, goes near the north door,
> stands in front of the table, and, while still
> talking, points to the boxes of books on the
> floor. Then he leans back in his chair, crossing
> his legs. "How many of you have read Little Women?"

<p align="center">* * *</p>

"Would you like me to read [quickly he reopens
the book] a little?" He looks around innocently.
"No?" He decisively closes the book and puts it
down. He opens another and begins reading.

Legitimizing Dominance

By virtue of their jobs, teachers have "positional
authority" (Webb, 1981). At the college level teachers not
only have practically autocratic control over the students'
grades, but can also prevent certain students from signing
up for or from continuing to attend a class. Teachers'
dominance is expected regardless of the ways in which they
choose to acknowledge or exert it, e.g., cushioning an
announcement of dominance with humor. In a course, however,
that is designed to elicit active student participation,
positional authority needs to give way to personal authority.
This, as Webb notes, becomes possible when teachers "work
patiently at developing positive relationships with students
and educating them for democracy" (p. 252). But also, again
on the college level, the change from perceiving teachers as
representatives of an authority group to perceiving them as
individuals who are personally dominant can occur as a result
of teachers legitimizing their dominance through frequent
references to professional experiences and projects. "Teach-
ing," Webb says, "is an audacious act, for it assumes that
teachers have something to offer students that is worth their
time, obedience, and attention" (p. 248). And to Webb's list
the college student might add money. The teacher of this

study--through frequent references to his writing projects, publications, convention experiences, consultancies, and famous acquaintances--legitimized his professional status and claimed, sometimes more audaciously than others, to offer students something of interest and of value.

Although he often mentioned his papers written and his talks given, this teacher's anecdotes about authors he met, whose books the class was or would be reading, attracted the most student attention. Less than an hour into the first class when introducing two of the required novels, The Chocolate War and Ordinary People, he says:

> "Probably one of the best authors . . . is Robert Cormier/ he's an exceptionally good writer. . . . I talked to him a few months ago and found that he's working on a sequel to The Chocolate War." He mentions the national survey he did on books that freshmen in college had read and he says that this book was the one most commonly required in courses on adolescent literature. He reads the first sentence: "They murdered him."

> * * *

> He discusses Ordinary People and explains that it is probably not adolescent literature but "professors get to choose what they teach." He talks about the author's--Judith Guest--writing patterns, that on a good day she writes two to three pages and some days only one good sentence. "Some of you in here will crank out a paper in two hours// that's why she's published and you're not."

One student reacted to such references in this way:

> It pulls us a little more into it/ especially when he can describe what the author was like and what things he or she said to T.

Another student, while describing the class, said:

> T would tell us his little story/ you know/ "Well/ I was talking to Judith Guest the other day" and we'd all go/ "Oh?"

References to professional interests and activities intrigue students on several counts. A story well-told is always a pleasure, but a story concerning the teller's relationship to a person of some celebrity imparts an aura of awe to the teller himself.

Generating Enthusiasm

Perhaps the most effective means for attracting people to one's interests is to be, or at least appear to be, enthusiastic about those interests. Enthusiasm is self-perpetuating, can be imparted to and increased by others. What may begin as a phony display by the teacher can quickly be transformed into the genuine item by the audience's excited reception to the feigned, but nevertheless enjoyable, performance. For instance, on the evening that T teaches Lord of the Flies, he tells me that this time around he had a hard time getting interested in the novel. But he introduces his lesson with "we'll have an adventure tonight" and maintains an appearance of being excited throughout his presentation. Such behavior is more than a reflection of what Goffman calls "a belief in the part one is playing"; it is playing enthusiastically the part that one believes should be played.

In a report on his extensive studies of American schools, on the nature of classroom interaction in particular, Goodlad (1983) regretfully concluded "that affect--either positive or negative--was virtually absent," that what he and his

colleagues observed "could only be described as neutral, or
perhaps 'flat' is a better adjective" (p. 467). He sees this
situation as resulting from the "very limited repertoire of
pedagogical alternatives" that are employed by the over-
whelming majority of teachers. A limited repertoire is no
doubt a source of "flat" classroom interaction. The data in
this study, however, also suggest that a teacher's willingness
to appear enthusiastic, whether feigned or not, contributes
immeasurably to the possible engagement or entertainment that
the pedagogical materials and strategies offer.

One student described the process of generating enhtusiasm
in this way:

> T is interested/ he's interested not only in what
> he thinks but in what we think// he loves his
> material/ he loves literature and you can feel
> that/ you can get excited about it as much as he
> gets excited about it// now I get excited about
> it because I'm just as excited/ but if he can
> get P excited about something like A Separate
> Peace/ then I think that's noted/ that's a very
> noteworthy achievement. . . .

When I asked T to give a general description of himself
as a teacher in the adolescent literature class, one of the
things he said was

> I tried to be/ enthusiastic about the teaching/
> believing that if I can generate some enthusiasm
> about the stuff I'm teaching/ I can generate
> some enthusiasm for their reading it/ "Yeah well
> maybe this isn't such a bad book after all"/
> would be curious to know for example the degree
> to which some books were read after/ class. . . .

Some of this teacher's other views on generating enhtusiasm
were cited in Chapter Three in the section on reciprocity.
Here he talked about the energizing effect of having a class

respond enthusiastically to his presentations. He concluded,
however, that

> I don't really know how I generate it/ I don't
> know that I always do generate it// I get a lot
> of students who do say I'm enthusiastic in class/
> I think I am/ I think I generally/ of course
> I've got the kind of job that I like/ it's easy
> for me to be enthusiastic about my job/ cause I
> like it. . . .

No one, of course, can be "on" or enthusiastic all of
the time. And certainly, as a rule, the college teacher has
an easier time--given, for example, the types of students
and the working conditions--of generating enthusiasm than
the public school teachers whom Goodlad observed. Neverthe-
less, even with its elusive and contextual nature, enthusiasm
does appear to be a demonstrated characteristic that can be
manufactured at will and can be intentionally engendered in
others.

Inviting

In <u>Inviting School Success</u> (1978), Purkey defines an
invitation as

> a summary description of messages--verbal and
> nonverbal, formal and informal--continuously
> transmitted to students with the intention of
> informing them that they are responsible, able,
> and valuable. . . . The word "invitation" has a
> special value: It indicates both respect for
> the one invited and responsibility on the part
> of the inviter. Invitational teaching is a
> "going with," rather than a "doing to," process.
> (p. 3)

Thus the process of inviting is a composite of effective
teacher behaviors for stimulating participation and learning.

Purkey bases his arguments for extending invitations to
students primarily on the beneficial effects invitations and
their acceptance appear to have on pupil self-concept. In
contrast, this study focused on the types of invitations
which function to direct student attention. Yet both the
present study and Purkey's work emphasize the significance
of the inviting process for sustaining student involvement.

Purkey distinguishes four levels of teaching: intention-
ally disinviting, unintentionally disinviting, unintention-
ally inviting, and intentionally inviting. He says: "While
all teachers function at all levels from time to time, most
teachers appear to function typically at one level more than
others" (p. 17). The teacher of this study was, without a
doubt, intentionally inviting. For example, while discussing
the characters in Lord of the Flies, he says:

> "Skip over to Piggy for a second and let your
> mind float around Piggy's space// fat." Several
> students add some characteristics. Although
> most students are taking notes, they respond
> almost in unison to T's questions or unfinished
> statements.

The intentionally inviting teacher is explicit and directive
in the invitations sent. This does not mean, however, that
there is an expected "correct" response predetermined by the
teacher. Because inviting teachers perceive students as
capable and responsible, student responses are valued even
when they disagree with the beliefs of their teachers. In
fact, inviting teachers encourage, even challenge, students
to see and express other possibilities. Again, from the
class on Lord of the Flies,

```
T asks, "Is evil inherent?/ Learned?/// What
    do you think about this question I asked?"
Some discussion among the students.
T.  "You're having trouble with this/ B?"
B.  "I hear what you're saying/ but I have a
    different opinion."
T.  "Let's hear it."
B pauses, says "OK," and elaborates.
More student discussion on inherent evil follows.
```

Underlying the well-laid plans of the inviting teacher

is the assumption that students enter the class already

motivated to learn. Purkey recommends:

> Rather than struggling to motivate students,
> the teacher may assume that they are always
> motivated. Thus the teacher can concentrate
> his or her energies toward influencing the
> direction of this motivation. (p. 23)

As Aristotle said in the first sentence of the Metaphysics:

"All people by nature desire to know." The teacher's job,

therefore, is to direct the natural curiosity of the students

or, in Eisner's (1983) terms, to "orchestrate." Eisner,

richly embellishing a teaching-is-orchestrating metaphor,

says:

> What we do as teachers is to orchestrate
> the dialogue moving from one side of the room
> to the other. We give the piccolos a chance--
> indeed to encourage them to sing more confi-
> dently--but we also need to provide space for
> the brass. And as for the violins, they always
> seem to have a major part to play. How is it
> going? What does the melody sound like? Is the
> music full enough? Do we need to stretch the
> orchestra further? When shall we pause and
> recapitulate the introductory theme? The clock
> is reaching ten and we have not yet crescendoed?
> How can we bring it to closure when we can't
> predict when a stunning question or an astute
> observation will bring forth a melodic line and
> off we go again? (p. 10)

Teachers orchestrate their classes in accordance with their

own plans and style, including inviting strategies. The

primary inviting strategies of the teacher of this study
were invitations to participate, invitations to think, invi-
tations to read, and special invitations.

Invitations to Participate

High levels of student participation were observed
throughout the semester in T's classroom. The following took
place during the discussion on A Separate Peace:

> "Question we just got into last week/ and I
> really didn't pursue it// was Gene guilty?" A
> three second pause. C doesn't think he is, but
> D does. M asks, "Is there a difference between
> being guilty and being responsible?" Quickly T
> says, "I don't know// I ask the questions."
> Laughter. A number of quick responses follow.
> There appears to be much attention; no pauses
> from student comment to student comment. T is
> leaning back in his chair. After several more
> responses, he jumps up and goes into his spiel.

Strategies T used for encouraging student response in-
cluded both specific and nonspecific questions, brainstorm-
ing, incomplete sentences, and two techniques discussed in
the last chapter, shared readings and small group activities.
As he said in the interview, all of these strategies sought,
among other goals, to "broaden the spectrum of participation,
the number of those who participate."

The use of open-ended questions, nonspecific ones in
particular, was this teacher's primary way of inviting all
students to participate. He invariably began and ended each
session on a novel with such questions as:

> What do you want to say about it/ what do you
> want to ask about it?

Did you like the book?

What else?

Anything that needs to be said for the good of
the whole?

Nonspecific questions quickly became routine, were expected,

and were usually followed by a spate of responses.

Invitations to Think

During an interview, T talked about the differences

between recitations and discussions. And although he believes

that both have their place in the literature classroom, he

said:

> I think discussions involve more people/ I think
> they're more fruitful/ I think they generate
> more thought/ they're not as efficient as reci-
> tations just as recitations aren't as efficient
> as lectures. . . . a discussion is likely to
> be pretty free-wheeling/ likely to get off-base/
> but it's also likely to be sufficiently off the
> wall that all of a sudden it stimulates some
> thinking/ stimulates some understanding that no
> one in the class had// initially/ you know some-
> one says something then someone else says "hey
> that's really a neat idea"/ I like that.

In this class invitations to think included the use of

analytical questions and rhetorical questions. Answering

some of the analytical questions involved selecting out an

author's particular use of language. For instance in the

discussion on A Separate Peace,

> T refers us to Chapter 10, page 128. "You
> actually have an interesting juxtaposition."
> He reads and compares the "separate peace"
> passage to Leper's warlike message in the tele-
> gram: "and the peace was over." T wants us to
> think about the number of times we get "war

language" in the novel. Students give examples
one after the other in an almost chanting
fashion. T asks, "Why were they jumping out
of trees to begin with?" He thinks that it's
a simulation for jumping off sinking ships.
While telling us to look at page 32 he says,
"Eloquent writing/ by the way."

Answering other analytical questions involved personal inter-

pretations of something in a novel or of a comparison between

novels. And on several occasions a student's answer led to an

informal debate among the students. For example:

After the break, T introduces A Separate Peace:
"How about L's comment/ is it [the novel] better
than Catcher in the Rye?" L clarifies, "more
readable." Several students disagree. T asks,
"Suppose you were driving from here to Miami in
a two-seater car/ would you rather have Holden
or Gene" as a companion?

Not all invitations to think were intended to generate

immediate student discussion. Some were extended in the form

of rhetorical questions. Frequently T used a rhetorical

question to introduce a topic or concept. And he would

answer the question himself before opening the general dis-

cussion. While talking about Catcher in the Rye, T said:

Holden Caulfield would like to stay 15 or 13
or 10 or whatever/ but he can't do it// keep
that sort of thing in the back of your mind as
we go through some of the things/ and these are
just a variety of the kinds of themes/ are just
a few of the kinds of themes I could have picked
out/ of Catcher in the Rye/ we'll do some more
next week// but let's start with the hypocrisy
notion// Why doesn't he want to grow up? Simply
because/ adulthood/ for him/ is filled with
hypocrisy/ phoniness// and he does't like
that// even though he himself is guilty of
them/ as someone earlier pointed out/// I'll
just give you a few examples. . . .

A clear distinction between invitations to participate

and invitations to think cannot, of course, be made. The

main difference between the two is that the former invita-
tions encourage and tolerate a variety of student responses,
whether anecdotal, descriptive, evaluative, or interpretive.
The latter are more directive and require that students
either engage in or witness problem-solving strategies.

Invitations to Read

Invitations to read were extended by the teacher to the
students from the first night of class to the last. The
teacher himself enjoys reading and talking about what he has
read. During the sessions on each novel many passages were
read to the students, and, later in the term, by the students.
But the most frequent invitations to read, both overt and
tacit, the teacher extended during the weekly class segment
on shared readings.

Three books--Scoppettone's Such Nice People, Blume's
Forever, and Chamber's Breaktime--were the novels most touted
by the teacher and, based on in-class student commentary,
were probably the most widely read books of the nonrequired
novels. Curiously, of the three, only Breaktime might be
considered suitable for use in the secondary schools and
even here an extended and unusual sexual passage could bring
the censors down on a teacher bold enough to use it. Such
Nice People, a fast-moving novel about a mentally ill and
murder-minded adolescent, and Forever, possibly the most
passed around novel among today's adolescents, are certainly

too explicitly violent and explicitly sexual, respectively, to find their way into a high school curriculum. Neverthe-less, these books were read by the students in this class, largely because of the teacher's frequent invitations to read them. Some examples of these invitations follow:

> T reads an excerpt from <u>Such Nice People</u> and explains that it is not intended for an adoles-cent audience. "Who wants it for next week? . . . it is the most bizarre book, bar none, I have ever read. . . ."

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

> "Ok/ before we get started/ a couple of things// <u>Such Nice People</u>/ who wants it for next week?" <u>Several students raise their hands.</u> "Ok/ D will have it finished by next week."

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

> "I was thinking the other day/ there are four books// that you might want to read/ two years ago/ three years ago. . . ." he tells about getting two separate letters both of which added postscripts to read Chamber's <u>Breaktime</u>. "I should add that I've shared that judgment [on how good it is] with a number of people who" weren't too impressed. He mentions three other books that have "slipped into obscurity" but are nevertheless excellent.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

> "Possibly the most popular adolescent literature author today known is . . . Judy Blume. . . . I've got a little number I do forever on <u>Forever</u> . . . which I'll do." And he does.

As the excerpt about <u>Forever</u> shows, at least in its entirety, invitations to read need not simply be "Why don't you read this? I think you'll like it." Such are, of course, effective to a certain degree after the teacher has legiti-mized dominance and has established rapport. But invitations

to read are perhaps more frequently accepted when the
teacher previews a novel while also exhibiting personal
intrigue with the writing or with the social phenomenon of
the novel's popularity.

Special Invitations

> T opens his notebook with the blue filler paper.
> "To begin with tonight/ I have the proverbial
> good news and the good news. . . . The good news
> is the class officially in here is going to end
> at 8:30/// [student cheers]/ the second part of
> the good news is. . . ." He hands out dittoed
> invitations to join him and his wife to watch
> Oliver Twist on TV at his house and to drink
> cokes, beer, and wine and to eat popcorn. . . .
> He says that as their professor he is not re-
> quiring attendance, "but I want to see Oliver
> Twist." He again invites all.

And so went the second of two extracurricular invitations
that this teacher extended to the class. The first was ex-
tended immediately before the mid-term examination--to join
him for "libations" at a nearby beer and sandwich place. As
one student said during an interview, unprompted:

> If you're going to talk about the success of
> T/ you might make note/ even if you're doing
> bad in class/ he invited everyone over to have
> popcorn and to watch a real slam bang version
> of Charles Dickens' Oliver.

When I asked another student what class activities she
liked the best, she said:

> . . . the open discussions were number one/ ah
> let me see// I liked meeting in small groups
> quite a lot// and you know what was really dif-
> ferent from other classes that I've had was when
> T invited us to his home to watch Oliver.

Other special invitations, although not as easily cate-
gorized as extracurricular invitations, offered students the
opportunity to share their experiences and to identify with
him as a person and with him as a teacher. That he was the
teacher and leader of this class was never in doubt in his
mind or in that of the students. But that he and the students
were always first of all people was an attitude that he ex-
pressed both in word and physical presence. Establishing
rapport is the process of conveying this attitude and is
the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT

Craftsmanship to be artistic in the final sense
must be "loving"; it must care deeply for the
subject matter upon which skill is exercised.
A sculptor comes to mind whose busts are mar-
velously exact. It might be difficult to tell
in the presence of a photograph of one of them
and of a photograph of the original which was of
the person himself. For virtuosity they are
remarkable. But one doubts whether the maker
of the busts had an experience of his own that
he was concerned to have those share who look
at his products. To be truly artistic, a work
must also be esthetic--that is, framed for en-
joyed receptive perception.

John Dewey
Art as Experience

The "truly artistic" experience, according to Dewey (1934/

1958), entails a rhythmic interplay of "doing" and "under-

going," of making and perceiving, of activity and sensitivity.

The artist is both creator and beholder. And this is as

true for the art of teaching as it is for the other perform-

ing arts, the plastic arts, and the literary arts. While

discoursing on that which "converts an activity into an act

of expression," Dewey says: "When the natural and the cul-

tivated blend in one, acts of social intercourse are works

of art" (p. 63). Likewise, the teaching act becomes a work

of art through the interplay of a teacher's deliberate

expressions and a continuous vigilance on the affect such expressions appear to evoke in students. Dewey (p. 65) further explains that "art is a construction in time," that it is "a prolonged interaction" of something within the self and something outside the self which culminates in a new form and order that neither the artist nor the medium originally possessed. The teacher works with a plethora of media, which is one reason for the complexity inherent in understanding the teaching act. Categories of teaching media include the instructional materials, the teacher's own experiences and characteristics, and the students themselves. This chapter is concerned with the latter, that is, with the ways in which a teacher "framed" his class sessions "for enjoyed receptive perception" and for active participation by the students and with the students.

Establishing rapport is a subprocess of involving that creates a classroom atmosphere conducive to an open, non-threatening, and personal (as opposed to impersonal) exchange of ideas. It is not altogether distinct from the evoking subprocess, but is rather a flowering of attracting and inviting that opens the class to the possibility of developing a deeper sense of community and of bringing about reciprocally enjoyed exchanges of thought and experience. The teacher, by deliberately seeking to establish rapport, creates involving events of an interpersonal nature. Three primary strategies for establishing rapport are disclosing, gaming, and reacting. Each of these strategies results from

the teacher's intent to gain favor through a studied spon-
taneity of expressed personal characteristics and interests
and through a sensitive awareness of students' dispositions,
feelings, and reactions.

Disclosing

Rosenblatt (1938/1968) says that, although scholarly
and critical approaches to teaching literature have their
proper place, the teacher must first attend to "the creation
of a situation favorable to a vital experience of litera-
ture," that the teacher must avoid placing "a screen between
the student and the book" (p. 61). Similarly, the teacher
must work toward lessening the inhibiting nature of most
classroom situations that results from the teacher's posi-
tional authority and the social discomfort of being crowded
together with strangers.

In the chapter called "The Setting for Spontaneity,"
Rosenblatt observes:

> In many cases there is an unbridged gulf between
> anything that the student might actually feel
> about the book, and what the teacher, from the
> point of view of accepted critical attitudes and
> his adult sense of life, thinks the pupil should
> notice.
>
> This often leads the student to consider
> literature something academic, remote from his
> own present concerns and needs. He recognizes
> a traditional aura about literature, but dis-
> cards it when his school days are past. . . .
> Thus he does not learn to turn spontaneously to
> the literature of the past or to the comparably
> good literature of the present; such works, he
> feels, must be approached only in full dress and

> decorum of critical method handed down by the
> teacher. He is cut off from the personal value
> they might have for him. (pp. 61-62)

The teacher can bridge the gulf between the students' feel-

ings of remoteness to a work and the work itself by revealing

how a work has personal value for the teacher himself. Dis-

closing is a process in which the teacher shares his personal

experiences, beliefs, and values. Disclosing comments need

not always relate directly to the work itself, but may be

tangential remarks that nevertheless increase student interest.

Not insignificantly, an immense advantage of self-revelation

is that, through the process of disclosing, a bond between

the teacher and the students is formed and nurtured. Fur-

ther, students come to respond in kind, and so develop a

rapport among themselves. Rosenblatt claims that "a sound

response to literature is dependent on the quality of the

reader's personal contribution" (p. 106). And this also

holds true for the teacher of literature.

On the evening I audiotaped the class, the teacher

introduced his opener by saying

> ". . . you might not be aware/ but if you have
> children or teach young children or/ if you read
> Playboy/ [laughter] you're probably aware of
> Shel Silverstein// and this is a Shel Silver-
> stein poem. . . I don't know how well I'll read
> this// [some talking in class]/ I've got an 'S'
> defect which you'll now notice for the rest of
> the evening// 'S' defects manifest themselves
> especially with a microphone. . . . I didn't
> realize I had this until I was a sophomore in
> college/ and I was taking Speech 101/ and I
> built this beautiful schedule for myself where
> I didn't have any classes at all on Tuesday or
> Thursday or none until two o'clock or something
> like that. . . ." He continues to explain that

the professor arranged for him to go to the
speech clinic on one of his "freed-up" days.
". . . my clinician was absolutely magnificent/
I don't know how she was in speech work/ but
[T starts laughing; so does the class]/ she was
in [laughs; students are giggling]/ and I got/
well// this book presents/ or this poem presents
certain problems because/ as you'll see in a
minute/ it's entitled "Sarah Sylvia Cynthia
Stout/ Would not Take the Garbage Out."

Two elements of disclosing--presenting self and reflecting
aloud--are demonstrated in this excerpt.

Presenting Self

Goffman (1959) says that the self

as a performed character, is not an organic
thing that has a specific location, whose
fundamental fate is to be born, to mature, and
to die; it is a dramatic effect arising dif-
fusely from a scene that is presented, and the
characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is
whether it will be credited or discredited.
(pp. 252-253)

The first night of class the teacher of this study said,

"you'll get to know more about me than you ever wanted to

know." Based on student reaction in class and in interviews,

it is doubtful that students tired of his revelations, which

could be both boastful and belittling. Throughout the

semester he expressed comfort with himself as an individual

who, like everyone else, has interesting everyday experiences

and comfort with himself as a teacher who enjoys his class-

room performances. The self he presented was affable, ex-

pansive, and accessible. For example, during the session

on Bridgers' All Together Now,

T says, "One of the reasons I think you're
reading this book/ because it's the town I grew
up in . . . only in Illinois." He explains that
the town had a Pansy and a Dwayne, "only it was
Daryl." "I think she's [Bridgers] done a good
job of evoking life in a small town."

Again talking about his small town, T relates
something his father said: "They talk about
you when you're well and take care of you when
you're sick." He tells about his mother's ill-
ness and how the town brought food to him and
his father when she would go to the Mayo Clinic.
He calls himself a "fat little kid" and says
something about almost wanting his mother to
go off sick. "It's a terrible thing to say."
Laughter.

There were.

There were, however, on one or two occasions what Goffman

calls "improper disclosures" and what this teacher called

"tacky confessions." One evening this teacher revealed some

details concerning an argument he was having with the

English department. Regarding this, in an interview one

student said:

I just didn't understand what he was talking
about// That was probably one of the rare occa-
sions that I just couldn't get what he was
saying. . . . I don't understand how the depart-
ment thing works// I don't understand anything
about the politics of the system. . . . I just
felt that he shouldn't have said that he was
going to stop teaching adolescent literature/
because I thought/ gosh/ why deprive future
generations of interested adolescent literature
readers about it/ cause you want to get people
interested in it and you're so excited/ why
don't you keep doing it/ But I guess you have
to do what you have to do// It made me sad
because it was such a good class.

Yet there was not, even in this student's remarks, any

concern about whether or not this teacher was, in Goffman's

terms, "authorized to give the performance in question"

(p. 59). In other words, the teacher did not seek to

misrepresent himself. Rather, he followed the pattern of most everyday performers in fostering the impression that the current performance of a routine was fresh, spontaneous, and specially evoked by the current audience. In such performances, Goffman explains, the "routine character . . . is obscured (the performer himself is typically unaware of just how routinized his performance really is) and the spontaneous aspects of the situation are stressed" (p. 49).

After the end of this course, I noted a superb example of a "routinized" performance. During a class discussion on two of the stories in an anthology this teacher edited, he said

> that he wanted to include "The Secret Life of
> Walter Mitty" but that his female editor "wouldn't
> let it go in because the woman [Mitty's wife] was
> a bitch. . . . There are some women who are in
> fact// bitches." Laughter. He mentions that that
> was probably why Rip Van Winkle slept so much.

Many months later in a corridor I heard him, in casual conversation, recount almost word for word the same anecdote. But, from all appearance, this brief anecdote achieved the same desired and mutually enjoyed result in the corridor that it did in the class. Certain routines are repeated not only because they aid the teacher in presenting an affable aspect of self but primarily because they have in the past been well received by others.

Presenting self, as implied in the quotations from Goffman, is risky business. The performer, whether teacher or student, fervently wants his performance, whether feigned

or sincere, to be credited by the audience. The teacher who strives to appear enthusiastic, but is not, can nevertheless manage the impressions he makes to the extent that students believe that he is enthusiastic. Enthusiastic student response can then "bump up" the teacher to a level commensurate with the enthusiasm that he originally intended to convey. However, the teacher who wants to appear learned on a subject, but is not, should refrain from attempting to foster such impressions because some aspects of self cannot be feigned for long. Discrepancies in presented self and actual self can result in discrediting the positional and personal authority of the teacher and, by association, in discrediting the value of the course material itself.

The attracting strategy termed "legitimizing dominance" in the previous chapter is also an element in presenting self. Mentioning one's professional experiences and accomplishments fosters an impression of self that both the students and the teacher deem congenial to classroom rapport.

One student, a high school English teacher, in an interview spoke to the advantages of presenting self:

> I think it's nice to know that your teacher/
> professor is a human being// and to hear what
> they've experienced// I'm not sure that I even
> do that in my own classroom/ but I/ personally/
> like that.

Reflecting Aloud

The preceding section on presenting self emphasized the controlled aspects of disclosing, the somewhat standardized

ways--perhaps more thought out ways--in which people, teachers in particular, manage the impressions that others have of them. Often, however, the most intriguing happenings in a classroom are the subtle, fleeting moments when a teacher reacts in an unexpected, sometimes personally insightful way to the discussion topic or to student response or inquiry. These are moments when the teacher is reflecting aloud.

The inscrutability of individual thought and feeling, of the idiosyncratic associations that certain stimuli trigger, are made apparent, but never completely revealed, by the process of reflecting aloud. Actually, reflecting aloud is more a characteristic than a process. And possibly it is a habit that can be cultivated. It results from personal comfort and is stimulated by contact with others who also are, at least for the moment, comfortable with themsleves and with the circumstances in which they have put themselves. Reflecting aloud may not be the key to successful classroom interaction; but it immeasurably adds an excitement, a stimulation, that occurs when anyone encounters another's sudden revelation of deep feeling or another's unexpected turn of mind. Observing the phenomenon of reflecting aloud is to see that "experience was always bigger than the formula" (Field, 1981, p. 156); it is to see that teaching, or any form of social interaction, cannot be adequately represented by a listing of discrete processes or of discrete skills.

Occurrences of reflecting aloud are scattered throughout the fieldnotes of this study. Some inform the teacher's disappointment with meager student contributions to the discussion; others allude to, without revealing, the teacher's private concerns. All appeared to receive student attention and, when followed by an expectant pause, stimulated student response. Several examples of reflecting aloud follow:

> T mentions Holden Caulfield's hatred of movies, "but he goes to them a lot// they're the source of his fantasies." T reads another paragraph to illustrate the "notion of phoniness/ hypocrisy . . . that dominates. . . . What else do you learn?/// Why do I do all the talking?" Some students talk; T helps out. "What else?"

> * * *

> A number of students are concerned about why Holden is so obsessed by what the ducks in Central Park do in the winter. T says: "Yeah/ I don't know/ I don't know/ it doesn't bother me as much as it bothered Holden/// but I can//// Haven't you/ within the last day or two/ the last week or two/ the last month or two/ been/ [slowly] concerned about something/ been sort of obsessed with something that really/ in the grand scheme of things/ [quickly] isn't all that important/ probably isn't/ doesn't have a whole lot with where. . . . [in a low voice] Help me out."

> * * *

> While discussing Cormier's The Chocolate War, a student asks: "Are you saying there's never a time to disturb the universe?" T responds: "I think there's always a time to disturb the universe. . . . I think I'm disturbing it now/ but that's neither here nor there/ I don't know."

Thus reflecting aloud is a disclosing process that establishes rapport through the teacher's willingness to share and his comfort in sharing immediate reactions to classroom happenings.

Gaming

Mandel, in <u>Literature and the English Department</u> (1970), says:

> Only as we let ourselves be caught up in the play world created by the artist are we truly alive to the meaning of literature. . . . For while we play, whether as children or adults, we relax, we open ourselves to experience. There is something obsessively childlike about most artists and lovers of literature. (p. 2)

Like Rosenblatt, Mandel believes that most English departments have narrow pedagogical goals, e.g., "the preservation of a received literary tradition," that greatly fall short of attending to the full range of the human sensibilities inherent in literary experiences. Among these oversights is the failure to acknowledge that literature has to do with joy and creativity. Literature should be taught as it is written-- with zest and a sense of play.

Gaming is the teaching technique of engaging students in fun and whimsy. It is play for the sake of play and yet it relaxes students and creates a climate for the expansion of the imagination.

For the second of the three small group activities, the teacher of this study placed the students in groups according to their birthdates. He approached the grouping task itself as a game. And here, as the following excerpt shows, there is a game within the grouping game.

> T begins the birthday grouping by betting that the odds are in a group this size that someone will have the exact same birthday--day and month-- as someone else in the class. L bets against it

but loses because there are two on the same day
in February. T, laughing, says: "Didn't we
bet a bottle of Chivas?" L says, almost under
her breath, "Let's go/ I'm game." She winks.
I'm not sure T caught this. T, teasing, says:
"I knew I was going to win that bet/ see I had
J [me] set up that when we got to December. . . ."

The term "game" implies winners and losers. And a com-
petitive aspect was definitely present in the play in which
this teacher engaged. In the example above, he included a
bet. In another grouping game, he gave each student a card
containing a quote or a description of a character. The
students were to mingle, discuss their cards, and arrange
themselves in groups each representing a different novel.
This activity required cooperation. The competition was
between the teacher and the class as a whole: Could the
students solve the problem he posed cooperatively and cor-
rectly? After some confusion, they did.

The grouping games were instances of gaming in its most
planned and controlled form: They were rule-governed and
teacher-directed. But they were merely interludes--important
ones remembered by students in the interviews--that comple-
mented the overall playful nature of this teacher's teaching
style. Regularly during each class the teacher employed
spontaneous and interpersonal gaming strategies that aided
in his ease of establishing rapport. Among these strategies
were problem solving and teasing.

Problem Solving

Problem solving in the context of gaming is a variation on the "guess what the teacher is thinking" ploy too often found in teacher questioning behavior--only with a difference. The teacher presents the problem as a game, the students know it is a game, and mutual enjoyment is the teacher's motive. Problem solving is playful thinking. Nevertheless, again a competitive spirit reigns. Students are questioned. Will they perform? But if not, that is all right too. Several examples of problem solving as a gaming strategy follow:

> T turns to the short story "Sixteen" and says that it has a great beginning for a short story. "I'll bore you for a few minutes." He reads, stops, looks around the class: "When was it written?" One student says "between 1946 and 1952." T responds, "You sound sure of that." Several other students venture guesses, incorrect ones. "Here's the big clue." T reads again about the casting of Gone With the Wind and quickly says, "written in 1938."

> * * *

> T asks the students to keep their eyes closed. On the board he writes in large letters "Keep off the the grass." Four students read the sentence aloud, each reading "Keep off the grass." T shows them the extra "the" and explains that his point is that they should carefully proofread their papers.

> * * *

> T recites several lines and asks, "Who said it?" B answers, "Shakespeare?" T says, "Yeah/ you can just about be right" if you say Shakespeare or the Bible when someone quotes.

Teasing

Teasing is the most subtle, and perhaps finest, form of gaming. Many of the senses that the term "teasing" can denote--e.g., pestering, coaxing, cajoling, belittling, joking, hazing--could be used to describe ways in which the teacher of this study interacted with individual students, the entire class, the class topics, and his own words and actions. He teased students, he teased about situations, and he turned his own words and characteristics against himself. The subtle nature of teasing, despite its blatant manifestations, is that it reveals feelings, beliefs, and values without the necessity of a serious declaration or of a maudlin display of affection. Yet the revelations are not entirely disguised; rather, they are protected by and encased in humor. The game is to win affection and approval; the means are a clever turn of phrase and the expedient use of a situation.

Before most classes, this teacher engaged in light, joking conversation with individual students. The second week of class he talks with a student (P) who was in one of his previous courses.

> P is talking to T about <u>Catcher in the Rye</u>.
> She doesn't seem pleased about it. T responds,
> "To what defect in your character do you attrib-
> ute your dislike?" She mumbles something. T
> says loudly, "The language!?" Standing nearer
> to her he asks, "Some profanity is better than
> others?" He laughs. M, across the room,
> responds to this.

Despite the teasing, T clearly expressed incredulity to this

student's reaction to a novel that, as he made known several classes later, he tremendously likes.

Some teasing was simply reworking old jokes into new situations. In the next excerpt, the teacher's sarcastic remark starts the small group reports and serves to relax the somewhat nervous student reporters.

> After the break the panel is formed with M, L, B, and E sitting in a horizontal row facing south from T's headquarters. T is sitting in the horseshoe with the students. Kicking it off, T says, "Let a group of intelligent people have at it// So I couldn't find a group of intelligent people. . . ." He laughs. So this is the panel.

Some student comments beg for jest. And this teacher on numerous occasions found the one-liner follow up to a student remark irresistible. The following occurred during the discussion on Blume's Are You There God? It's Me Margaret:

> B says that he found the book trivial, for example the part about "God, give me big breasts" given the world's problems. P replies, "When you're growing up/ those are big things." T says, "Or so you hope." Laughter. T adds, "I apologize for that." He asks the class to talk about something else "while I blush," which he does.

Even though the teacher embarrassed himself by his comment, the good humor that such vignettes exhibit assures the continuance of classroom rapport.

Not all teasing is directed toward or in response to others; some is turned toward oneself. Like disclosing, gaming can establish rapport by sharing personal experiences and feelings. But the deep personal concern underlying the reported situation can only be inferred through the teasing

veneer. For example, several times during the semester this
teacher mentioned the "love/hate" relationship between him-
self and his daughter. The following he related during a
discussion on Holden Caulfield's speech patterns.

> Our younger daughter cannot say ten words/ un-
> less two of them are "you know"// and/ that
> does become obfuscating in a conversation. . . .
> I try to tell her in my subtle way . . . I say
> "Yeah/ I know.". . . She gets my message/ and
> what's the upshot of it all?/ She won't talk to
> me anymore.

On this audiotape laughter, knowing laughter, followed these
remarks. The teacher in a playful way and for a brief moment
exposed a personal concern but protected his feelings by
making light of the situation. Here he appeared to have a
personal insight, although it was probably not gained at
that moment and perhaps it derived from, in his words, "a
good story made better." But he demonstrated to the class
the risks in calling critical attention to another's use of
language.

Teasing is a use of language that when artfully and
sensitively employed establishes rapport by sharing with
others one's mirthful ways of thinking and of looking at
the world.

Reacting

That people want and seek approval--i.e., in Goffman's
terms, want their performances "credited"--is neither a new
nor a profound idea. The interesting issues are for what

reason does someone want approval? By seeking approval,
what are the social psychological problems that the performer
is trying to solve? In an interview, the teacher of this
study said:

> I don't know that I'm into the power scene as
> much as I'm into the ego scene/ you want people to
> like you/ I like entertaining them. . . . I be-
> lieve that I have a perspective on what I do that
> this isn't really the most important thing in the
> world/ I'm not certain that I know what the most
> important thing in the world is/ but I have a
> feeling that I know what it isn't/ and teaching
> Catcher in the Rye to a bunch of college seniors
> isn't the most important thing in the world/ for
> them or for me/ but as long as we go into it with
> the notion that it's not necessarily a bad thing/
> or an unimportant thing/ we can have some fun
> doing it. . . .

The use of the pronoun "we" in the last few lines above
signifies, perhaps more than his stated desire to entertain
students, his commitment to establishing rapport with members
of the class. He sought to create mutual involvements with
the students in the class activities and in the literature.
And he knew, and so acted in accordance with this knowledge,
that the best way to establish reciprocal rapport is to get
students talking about their experiences, beliefs, reactions
to novels. He wanted to be credited for leading a class
mutually enjoyed by all.

Disclosing and gaming establish rapport through the
language acts of self-revelation and word play. Reacting
establishes rapport through the complementary processes of
engaging and disengaging student talk. Reacting is not a
preplanned maneuver but is rather an immediate response

intended to further the overall plan of the course and to encourage a "broad spectrum of participation."

Engaging

In The Paideia Proposal (1982), Adler optimistically claims that class discussion

> teaches participants how to analyze their own
> minds as well as the thought of others, which is
> to say it engages students in disciplined con-
> versation about ideas and values. (p. 30)

Adler puts forth an ideal, which is all he and the other members of the Paideia Group claim to do. But there is little supporting evidence that discussion indeed teaches analysis of one's mind and, further, the notion of a "disciplined conversation" has not been defined and, as such, lacks criteria. Perhaps teacher expectations of student response to a piece of literature should not include analytical acumen gained through class talk nor include discipline in class talk. Rather, a reasonable teacher expectation is that students will be naturally motivated to learn that which is enjoyable. And one source of enjoyment is to be sincerely engaged in a conversation that focuses on what you, the student, think and feel.

Engaging is the process of immersing students in the discussion by talking directly to them as people (as opposed to them as classroom performers, i.e., students) and by sharing with these people one's own reactions to the imme- diate happenings. It is a reciprocal process in that the

teacher offers his response to a passage or to a student comment and expects in return that students will be interested in what he says and will be stimulated to share their own reactions.

Engagements between teacher and students often follow the teacher's invitation to participate. At the close of an open discussion on the use of language in Catcher in the Rye, the teacher of this study asked one of his routine, non-specific questions.

> T asks, "Other comments/ questions/ about that?"
> After a two second pause, D says: "I haven't
> read it in a long time/ but I've forgotten how
> much I really loved that kid [Holden Caul-
> field]. . . . He's just so good/ and so kind/
> to everybody/ . . . does term papers . . . loans
> his clothes . . . feels sorry for the person
> whose luggage isn't as good as his. . . . He
> cares so much. . . . It just moves me so/ and
> of course his own pain is so intense . . . I
> just literally got tears in my eyes at that end
> when he is// when he's talking about how beauti-
> ful it is to watch his sister go around and
> around [on the carousel] in that little
> coat. . . ." T responds, "Wish you could've
> been there." D says, "Yeah/ right." T says,
> "And/ so do I/ wish I could've too." D responds,
> "I know/ I know." Both D and T speak here with
> feeling, almost as if they're experiencing
> Holden's moment beside the carousel.

The mutual personal involvement in the novel exhibited here created a truly moving moment in the class and for the class. This protocol excerpt not only illustrates an emotionally intense focus on a literary passage but, more significantly, shows two people reacting sincerely and spontaneously to feelings shared.

Mutual engagements frequently followed the teacher's nonspecific questions. Through subtle prodding, waiting

for student response, and accustoming students to his class routines, this teacher encouraged and received unguided and, perhaps, unguarded student reactions to their readings. His job then was to react to their comments in a way that would further engage them in the novel and in his presentation of the novel. The following excerpt took place during the opening discussion of Guest's <u>Ordinary People</u>.

> T asks, "What else do you want to say about
> <u>Ordinary People</u>?" B talks about this being the
> only book he's read which uses the present
> tense. T says, "No/ there's others." T appears
> to think and then adds, "Is that a good thing?/
> Open to page one" where Conrad's thinking about
> bumper stickers. T reads. "What do you think
> about that?/ Would it be better if it were in
> the past tense?/ What are the advantages and
> disadvantages?" P begins to talk, but has
> trouble. R, then L, and then C attempt to
> answer, but all have trouble articulating a
> response. T jumps in: "I think you're all
> saying good things. . . . If it's past tense/
> we feel the author knows" what's going to
> happen. But if it's in the present tense we
> feel that "the author is learning then at the
> same time we are," and we feel the immediacy.

This teacher, as noted in the excerpt above, was careful not to criticize student comments but nevertheless inserted his own opinions and ideas. As one student said during an interview:

> The student could feel very free about bringing
> up any question that he had/ rather than the
> teacher being in charge of everything that you
> were supposed to have questions about.

Such a sense of being free to express doubts, wonder, and ideas comes about, in part, through the nonthreatening and personal reactions of a teacher who is comfortable with his exhibited and accepted classroom dominance. The teacher

invites students to react, they react, and he then engages them in a deeper, more studied look at the phenomenon that first attracted their attention.

Other instances of mutual classroom engagements include sharing personal experiences in the form of anecdotes and even shared amazement about student-student and teacher-student disagreement on what has appeal and quality. This teacher, for example, did not like the movie Arthur and, in fact, one evening listed a number of evaluative criteria for literary works on which he thought the movie was dismally inadequate. Nevertheless, the general student consensus remained that Arthur was a good movie. Engaging is not the same as agreeing; rather, engaging is a process that results in mutual respect regardless of the disparities in personal belief.

Disengaging

Disengaging, as a teacher act, appears at first to be an exercise in alienating students and so appears to be the antithesis of engaging. Isolated instances of teacher disengagements from student talk can create the impression that a teacher is single-minded in his efforts to teach something and that he is solely interested in his own talk and plans. To the contrary, disengaging is the necessary complement to engaging. Once students are talking about an issue or a passage, they can and often will continue the conversation

with each other or with the teacher to the most peripheral
points of a topic. The teacher as engager, thus, must also
be the disengager. He needs to know when and where to move
the discussion along the paths that he has determined will
engage the students, and himself, in the most enjoyable and
productive talk. He must, in the disentangling threads of
the moment, recursively reroute the discussion. Disengaging
is the act of rerouting the discussion toward ends that the
teacher believes and feels will be most beneficial for general
student involvement and elucidation. Neither student nor
teacher will long remain interested in classroom events if
discussions are allowed to disintegrate into individual
diatribes or scattered remarks.

During the opening discussion of Hinton's The Outsiders,
for instance, two students became absorbed in recounting a
past experience:

> A says she liked the novel because it reminded
> her of junior high school. She refers to S who
> attended the same school at the same time she
> did. They both get into telling a story about
> a kid they knew who stole a car. They laugh
> and carry on together for what seems to be at
> least five minutes, but they seem, from the
> looks on the faces of other people in the class,
> to be the only ones enjoying this. S giggles
> the whole time. A goes on about "the dumb things
> we did." T is sitting back, shaking his foot
> back and forth. He doesn't comment on their
> tale. When they appear to be spent, T asks the
> class, "What else do you want to say about The
> Outsiders?"

The simplest disengaging maneuver is not to comment on student
remarks. By remaining impassive to student dialogue, students
soon cease their talk for lack of teacher response and support.

The danger in impassivity is that, as here, student digressions can continue far beyond the point of interest, amusement, and appropriateness.

A more effective disengaging maneuver is to seize a pause in student talk to make a comment or to pose a question that will refocus the discussion. For example:

> S says, "My little brother's 15 and/ you know/ he'll always bring his friends over and/ it'll make your ears burn to listen to them." T is sitting forward, watching S. He says, "And you may recall that Salinger's character/ Holden/ says 'and all' all the time. . . ."

Sometimes, however, the only way to disengage student talk, especially with a student who has already talked a lot, is simply to interrupt. For instance, while several students are reacting to their readings of Bantam Book's Choose Your Own Adventure series,

> M informs us that there's another series called Choose Your Own Way. M continues, "My little boy got one Saturday-" T breaks in: "The scuttlebutt I hear/ is that they are [referring to Choose Your Own Adventures]// going through some schools/ like wildfire// [then quickly] E/ what grade do you teach?"

In the student interviews I asked what there was about the class or the teacher that annoyed them. Classroom teachers and the student teachers seemed to agree that, if anything, they felt the class could have been more time efficient and then typically cited the late hour of the class on a school night. Several other students reacted to this teacher's practice of disengaging student talk. One student, S in the excerpts above, said:

Ok/ Maybe one aspect of his teaching/ once in a
while/ maybe it was when he wasn't in a good mood
or something/ if someone presents something that
he just really didn't/ I mean/ that he just/ that
T didn't relate to at all/ this only happened I
guess only once or twice/ he would close the
matter pretty quickly. . . .

Another student, a loquacious but perceptive one, said:

As much as I've preached about how good he was
at listening and asking questions/ there were
times that I had something more to say/ and other
times that I thought when I was saying something
that T wasn't being completely sympathetic. . . .
Sometimes I'd say, "You know/ there's this thing
about this book and I can't put my finger on
it" and he'd make some kind of joke/ he'd make
me the butt of the joke or something like that/
I don't remember exactly what it was/ but I felt
really bad/ I really had something I wanted to
say and I got shot down/ but that was a completely
rare thing// Um// no/// I think T's one of the
best teachers I've ever had/ I can't think of a
teacher I've enjoyed more having. . . .

Students may indeed feel "shot down" by disengaging

maneuvers. But the course, in the final analysis, is the

teacher's show and to borrow a theater cliché, the show must

go on. Further, disengaging serves to increase the sense of

time efficiency in a class designed for student discussion

and so increases the feeling that the class is moving along.

Perhaps what Adler means by a "disciplined conversation" is

a directed and vigilant rhythm of engaging and disengaging

student talk.

Classroom rapport is established through the strategies

of disclosing, gaming, and reacting. These strategies inter-

act with the evocative aspects of attracting and inviting to

create a classroom environment in which students feel

comfortable expressing their ideas and sharing their experi-
ences. The teacher, having determined the acclimating
routines, evokes student attention, interest, and response
and maintains these by establishing a rapport that is "framed
for enjoyed receptive perception."

CHAPTER SEVEN

STAGING

> O! Muse of fire, that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention;
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene.
>
> William Shakespeare
> Henry V

Staging is the subprocess of involving in which the teacher arranges his classroom performances and performs them before the audience of his students. The teacher is writer, director, and performer. Unlike the legitimate actor, the teacher rarely enters the classroom stage with scripts memorized and actions rehearsed. Rather, he enters with a set of instructional plans and with a set of routines that experience has honed. But artistry in teaching, in contrast to craftsmanship only, entails that the teacher exploit opportunities as they occur, that the teacher stage happenings when the moment is ripe. Such opportunities may be spurred by ideational associations or by student reactions. In either case, the artistic performer embraces the moment and gathers his words and actions into a response intended to create reciprocally absorbing events. Two key strategies for effective staging are arranging the performance and performing.

Arranging the Performance

Arranging a teaching performance entails first that the teacher come to class prepared. The teacher of this study said:

> I worked hard to be prepared and I worked hard
> to appear to be prepared/ I think often the
> appearance of being prepared is almost as impor-
> tant as the preparation.

Attention to appearances, as this teacher noted, is an impor- tant aspect of staging classroom events. The show of schol- arly preparation, the show of time spent thinking about a lesson gives the impression that the material and the class are worthwhile and meaningful to the teacher. And the teacher by entering the class obviously prepared--with notes, books, handouts, perhaps a game or two--not only looks but also feels prepared to perform well.

Preparation alone is not, of course, sufficient for arranging a reciprocally enjoyable and beneficial performance. Preparation must be undertaken with the needs and nature of the particular student audience in mind. Goffman (1959) says, "All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify." And he adds that most people do not consciously maintain "an incipient familiarity with the routine of those to whom we address ourselves" (p. 72). The teacher, however, must. The teacher must know who his students are when arranging the classroom performance or, at least, he must know to what his students will attend and respond.

Behind the scene preparation, the "backstage" in Goffman's terms, is the prerequisite for a good performance. It may include much thought on ways to intrigue students with a favorite but obscure literary work or even on how to spend as little class time as possible on a novel while maintaining the impression that the novel is somehow significant in the grand scheme of the course. In any case, backstage activity is the teacher's private domain and is ultimately aimed at a successful, regardless of the teacher's objectives or motives for his choice of presentation, on-stage performance.

The basic elements of an artistic on-stage teaching performance are the same as those of a well-written paper or novel--introduction, body, conclusion--with a difference. Continuing the theatrical theme, the elements for arranging a classroom performance are setting the stage, enacting the scene, and closing the curtain.

Setting the Stage

> "Ok/ let's move to the most popular adolescent
> novel probably/ of all time." T closes the
> door. Walking back to his headquarters he says,
> "I don't know if it _is_ an adolescent novel/ in
> fitting with our definition of adolescent novels/
> or not." He leans on his table. "But that's of
> course half true of them all."

And so began this teacher's introduction to Catcher in the Rye. He signaled a serious departure from the preceding activities by closing the door. He signaled the significance of the occasion by assuming a tense posture and a professorial tone of voice.

Continuing his introduction to the novel, he said:

> What's the kind of perspective a person should
> take on a work of literature?/ There are an awful
> lot of literature classes that always begin with
> 'let me tell you about the author'/ my classes
> aren't among those/ if you want to know something
> about Salinger go to the library and look it up/
> you won't find much/ I'll tell you that.

He did, however, elaborate on Salinger's personal and pro-

fessional preference for the reclusive life. Then, drawing

the students' attention back to the novel, he asked:

> Your questions/ comments/ concerns?/ What do
> you want to say about it? What do you want to
> ask about it?

Five seconds elapsed before a student responded. But after

that, the ice now broken, students competed for openings to

react. The stage was set. And the show began.

One evening after the mid-term examination, the students

did not immediately respond to the teacher's call for student

comments on their outside readings. The teacher again asked

if anybody wanted to talk about a nonrequired book. But,

without pause, he said:

> "Well/ you've read at least two books for
> tonight/// Let me tell you a bit about Sue
> Ellen Bridgers," an author he says he knows
> "pretty well." He says that she was 37 or 38
> before she wrote her first novel. . . . "So/
> what do you want to say about All Together Now?"

And once more the stage was set for discussion by signaling

the serious business ahead. Further, the teacher revealed

that he was acquainted with one of the evening's authors and

so, by association, was the primary informer and performer.

Nevertheless he demanded audience participation, active

involvement. No one-man shows were allowed. An informed audience was required.

The necessary skills for approaching the presentation and discussion of a novel resemble those of the performing arts: a sense of timing, a show of serious intent, dramatic flair. Showmanship further entails a desire to perform well and a strong professional ego.

Effectively setting the stage greatly increases the likelihood that students will attend to the performance and will, in turn, become actively or empathetically a part of the instructional scene. The stage is set after the teacher announces the next act, prefaces the coming scene with background remarks or with expressions indicating personal involvement, and includes students in the production.

Rubin (1983) asks, "What accounts for the fact that some classes are exciting and others are dreary?" And he suggests that "a more 'dramatic' classroom might enhance student commitment" (p. 44). The data of this study support his hypothesis.

Enacting the Scene

But how does a teacher act in a "'dramatic' classroom?" What keeps the show going after the stage is set? Robert Burns wrote: "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men/ Gang aft a-gley." And so they do. Teachers plan essential presentations, but time and again these fall flat. Scholarly

preparation, informative lectures, small group activities, and other pedagogical scripts are not enough to kindle student enthusiasm.

The data of this study suggest that the key to stimulating students is to insist that they participate in the ensuing drama. The teacher (the primary performer) and the students (those for whom the performance is intended) must work together to glean the insights from the literature all have read and privately reacted to. The scene is enacted with the help of the students. This is not to say that teachers should totally rely on student talk for the impetus of the class. Rather, the emphasis of the entire class is on student response directed by teacher focus and interest.

One technique this teacher used for including students in the instructional scene was to lead them in brainstorming sessions on such topics as the traits of the characters in the novels or the problems associated with dilemmas in which the characters found themselves. For instance, during the presentation of <u>Catcher in the Rye</u>, students called out their ideas on the problems or concerns that adolescents have. This list, written on the board, included many of the themes that the teacher had intended, and had written in his lesson plans, to develop. Concluding the brainstorming session, he said about <u>Catcher in the Rye</u>:

> "It addresses in so many ways/ many of these problems/ and it mixes these up." Circling his finger around several of the things he's written on the board, he says that the "better adolescent

novels" include and mix many of these up, unlike,
say, Forever, which is mainly about sex.

The presentation of this novel was teacher directed and yet
was, at the same time, built on student contributions.

The drama unfolds through thoughtful planning on what
aspects of a novel students can and will respond to and on
unintimidating ways to draw out their responses. Brainstorm-
ing is one method. Another is to recall or read a pro-
vocative passage and then to ask students for their reactions.
For example, this teacher suggested that perhaps Holden
Caulfield, like many adolescents, was frightened of his
sexuality. He talked about the section where Holden is
spending the night at a teacher's home.

> "Is Antollini gay?" Some discussion. Referring
> to Antollini, T asks, "What's he doing?/ Is he
> making a pass?" More discussion on Holden's con-
> cern about being approached by homosexuals. T
> ends the discussion by saying that Holden cer-
> tainly thinks that Antollini is coming on to him.
> He reads the passage and opens it for discussion.
> Lots of discussion. T reads some more, acting
> out the dialogue. Laughter. T says, "It doesn't
> make a difference whether Antollini makes a pass
> or not// What's the significance of Holden
> thinking that about Antollini?" A student sug-
> gests that he's one more person who has disap-
> pointed Holden. T responds that it's more than
> that and says, "There's/ no/ adult/ model at
> all for him now." He discusses Antollini's
> importance for Holden. He flips through the
> book looking for the passage on "the mark of
> the mature man."

With a large group, keeping a conversation, like the
one above, going occurs when an informed, enthusiastic leader
listens and directs. Conversation is indeed possible among
groups of 20 or 30 people. But such requires participants

who are constantly stimulated by their own thoughts, by
their own talk, and by the reactions of others. Enacting
an instructional scene is not a sole enterprise. For there
to be an instructional scene, the primary performer must en-
list participants.

Closing the Curtain

Knowing how to end a discussion or a presentation is
as important as knowing how to begin. Such dicta as "leave
them laughing" and "leave them wanting more" apply to both
stage and classroom performances. A snappy or thought-pro-
voking conclusion strengthens the overall effect of the
presentation and increases the possibility that students
will continue to think about, and to discuss among themselves,
the novels.

In an interview one student summarized his general de-
scription of the class by saying:

> So like I say/ round robin affair/ interrogation/
> we've got games/ we've got a break and// always
> a happy ending/ always some kind of food for
> thought to leave/ to our cars/ go home and think
> about the books// which is nice.

In another interview a student answered my question on
whether she thought that her impressions of this class dif-
fered from those of other students by saying:

> No/ in fact I've seen/ you know/ just out at
> night or something/ I run into other students/
> and/ you know/ a lot of classes you just block
> out/ not even saying anything about it [laughs]/
> but I ran into P/ we were talking about that it
> was just an excellent class/ that we enjoyed

reading the literature// It was a very good experience/ I think that was good/ if it made that much of an impression on us.

An ending that leaves a favorable impression is not, of course, enough to counteract an otherwise boring, lifeless presentation. But it goes far in maintaining the enthusiasm and involvement already engendered. Further, "a happy ending" creates good feelings toward this class and leads to positive expectations for the next.

The teacher of this study closed the curtain on his presentation of A Separate Peace in the following way.

> T quickly looks at his watch. "One of the questions I want to get into later/ not tonight/ is why it was told 15 years later." T says that he is going to end the class by reading excerpts from Knowles' short story "Phineas," written before A Separate Peace. He reads. "One major difference/ this story is told in 1942/ as told by a person who was there." About A Separate Peace he says, "It seems to me that the language is absolutely eloquent/ The language in "Phineas" is just ho hum. . . . Shows you how Knowles grew as a writer. . . . Anything that needs to be said for the good of the whole?/ Ok." He slaps the chair arms. And that's it.

Ending the evening's discussion on All Together Now, this teacher said:

> Another thing I'd like you to take a look at is you've got/ together/ here generally likeable people. . . . Many people in literature are blackguards/ Oh/ I don't know if I would like to take a trip to Miami with them or not. . . . The people in All Together Now are pretty well put together. . . . All Together Now is// all together done/ for the moment/ [laughs]/ We'll come back to it next week.

Closing the curtain on his presentation of the history of adolescent literature, he said:

In the words of the immortal Shakespeare/ I'll catch your act next week.

Performing

Eisner (1979) describes artistic teachers as those who

provide a climate that welcomes exploration and risk taking and cultivates the disposition to play. To be able to play with ideas is to feel free to throw them into new combinations, to experiment, and even to "fail." It is to be able to deliteralize perception so that fantasy, metaphor, and constructive foolishness may emerge. (p. 160)

To perform before a group is to take risks, to experiment with expressions, sometimes to fall flat and pick oneself up only to take risks again. To perform well is to enjoy the act of performing. People do model the behaviors of those they watch. If teachers enjoy playing with ideas in the classroom, if they are willing to be occasionally foolish and experimental, some students will follow suit. "Constructive foolishness," an intriguing concept, often results from teachers' attempts to involve students in literature by acting out a scene or by reading a passage with exaggerated emotion or even by suddenly directing, with intensity, comments to one student.

Performing well is such an aggregate of individual characteristics publicly expressed, of behaviors modeled after other performers, and of strategies developed from experience that to provide a step-by-step guide to successful classroom performance is not possible, nor advisable. Some

useful heuristic devices, however, can be abstracted from successful teaching practice. The data of this study suggest four factors associated with skillful performances in literature classrooms: empathetic imagination, interpretive reading, dramatic vignettes, and word play.

Empathetic Imagination

Empathetic imagination is the product of a series of ideational associations triggered by literature, experience, or student response. And empathetic imagining is the act of displaying personal involvement in an imaginary situation. It is, in a sense, putting oneself in another's shoes. It is pretending and supposing, fantasizing and empathizing.

The first night of class, when the teacher of this study reviewed many of the popular adolescent novels, he related the following anecdote.

> "A good story made better concerns a friend of mine in Ohio. . . ." She had recommended _Forever_, then Blume's latest book, to her students without having read it herself. After she noticed that lots of kids were reading it, she decided to read it. "Envision as I'm reading this," T says, "that you're that seventh grade teacher in Ohio." He laughs and reads the scene where Kathy is changing her shirt upstairs in her bedroom and her boyfriend Michael has come along. "Now our seventh grade teacher in Ohio is starting to sweat/ for a variety of reasons. . . ." Several students laugh. T continues reading. When he reads Jamie's line "Were you fucking?" several students giggle. T says that the teacher is now thinking that she just lost her job.

This excerpt is part of a longer routine on _Forever_ that the

teacher has performed several times in classes and during professional talks. It is entertaining, attention-grabbing; further, it demonstrates a skillful use of presenting a scenario that imaginatively places students in the shoes of the teacher from Ohio. First, of course, the teacher had to empathize with his friend's dilemma. Then he recreated her situation for the class.

Empathetic imagining is also a powerful way of depicting characters in novels. For instance, during his presentation of <u>Ordinary People</u>, this teacher empathized with the father Cal.

> "How about the title . . ./ know where the title derives?" He refers us to page 87 and sets up the scene giving us some background, insight, and feeling for Cal. "God he wants it to end/ he wants Con to be well. . . . How do you feel about that/ Are they ordinary people?" Discussion among the students. T talks about how affluent Cal and his family are. "So Cal has mucho bucks . . . even by Lake Forest standards/ but as C said/ you can't stop the kid from drowning with all those bucks . . . and he'd love to become ordinary."

But empathy need not be limited to feelings for friends and fictional characters. Taking the perspective of the author provides an additional angle from which teacher and students can understand a novel. During the discussion on <u>Lord of the Flies</u>,

> T talks about Rousseau's "noble savage" idea, about civilization being the cause of evil. He compares this to Huck Finn who's fine on the river but not when he gets on the bank. "Golding says, 'Huh! It ain't so/ evil is inherent. . . . How do I know? I put people on an island and they developed a civilization . . . but it eventually broke down. . . . Evil is inherent.'"

In the presentation of a novel, the empathetic imagination can concoct scenarios that create a sense of being there for students and that show students ways in which they can become involved in the characters and authors, and even in the retelling, of literature.

Interpretive Reading

The teacher of this study read to his students throughout the term, many times in each class. He entered class with a filled bookbag or two. And he read from the books he withdrew. That he was fond of literature was apparent from his constant references to poems, novels, short stories, and plays and was also demonstrated by his frequent, theatrical readings.

The second evening of class he elaborated on eight criteria that people can use for evaluating literature. One of the criteria was "escape." He mentioned such genres as mysteries, westerns, pot-boilers, and science fiction. Then, with little warning, he read a poem. In the protocol I wrote:

> T reads a Longfellow poem softly, like the
> poem. To me his voice is musical, almost mes-
> merizing. I don't hear the words. I feel as if
> I'm floating gently down a stream. He finishes
> reading. "Can you lose yourself in that/ harder
> to do in poetry/ but you can." Then he says,
> "I'm going to read one more to you." Setting
> up a sombre scene he reads without giving us a
> title or author. I recognize the poem as Poe's
> "Annabel Lee." Again his voice is soothing,
> mesmerizing. He talks briefly about the "overall
> mood" and escape. "Can you lose yourself-" He

breaks here and quickly says, "Ah/ let's go on
to one more criterion."

His readings of these poems were, no doubt, intended to
bring about such reactions as mine.

Interpretive reading is not just for escape and enter-
tainment. It can bring students into a passage of a novel
that the teacher wants to elucidate. For example, during
the presentation of <u>A Separate Peace</u>, this teacher performed
in this way:

> "If you like literature that paints pictures . . .
> can you do much better than <u>A Separate Peace</u>?//
> So/ I know something about prep schools// but
> not much more than a tourist. . . . I really
> have a feeling that I know what Devon looks
> like . . . and what's my source?/ John Knowles."
> T refers us to page 128. "You actually have an
> interesting juxtaposition" here. He reads and
> then compares this "separate peace" passage to
> Leper's warlike message in the telegram, "and
> the peace was over." While telling us to look
> at page 32 he says, "Eloquent writing/ by the
> way." He reads. He looks up and remarks, "I'll
> never forget what I was doing when Kennedy
> died." He adds some details of that day.
> "World War II was that for Gene."

Choosing certain passages to read and reading these
with intensity and flair is perhaps the essence of enliven-
ing a literature classroom. Reading, with fun and feeling,
is enjoyable for all round. And enjoyable experiences are
those that people desire to continue.

<u>Dramatic Vignettes</u>

Rubin (1983) recommends the use of "dramatic episodes"
as one way "to make learning intriguing," and he describes

these as "brief vignettes to illustrate the focal point of a lesson." Further, he says: "'Lures' of this sort, used at the beginning of a unit, serve as motivational prods, urging students to become involved" (p. 46). "Lures" of this sort are also useful "motivational prods" throughout the presentation of a work of literature.

Dramatic vignettes include descriptions of literary passages, anecdotes, role-playing, even digressions. After the names of authors and novels fade, some well-told vignettes endure in the imagination and memory of students. Vignettes present opportunities for vicarious experiences, for momentarily identifying with characters, with events, with the teller. They animate the frozen written words. Oral creations of images of times and places, characters and ideas, stir up both the active and idle, yet rich, images of listeners.

During an interview I asked a student if she would tell me about a class discussion that she vividly remembered. After a long pause, she said:

> The only thing that really stands out is when he was telling us about the young girl that he knew in Illinois/ that he went and asked the boy if the boy would pay attention to her/ as a person/ and see what would happen and the girl started liking him and the boy got upset and the boy came to him and told him "What have you gotten me into?" and everything/ and I remember him talking about something and the class talking about something// It was some book we were discussing . . . but I don't remember which one.

The book was The Outsiders. The focus of the discussion was on socio-economic status and the problems that disparities

in status can cause among adolescents in high school. My
protocol of this session is as follows:

> After looking at his watch, T decides to tell
> another story. It's about a low SES female who
> T, when he was teaching high school, asked some
> of the guys to befriend. This ploy sort of back-
> fired when she became serious about one of the
> guys and asked him to a Sadie Hawkins dance. The
> guy got out of it by inventing a cousin who he
> said he had to take because she belonged to the
> same country club. Referring to the girl, T
> says, "Don't knock the fantasies if you haven't
> engaged in them/ and if you say you haven't/
> I'll say you're a liar." Laughter. Referring
> to the situation, he says, "I just create prob-
> lems/ I don't solve them."

Dramatic vignettes reveal the teacher's personal involve-
ment in a piece of literature and, perhaps, demonstrate to
students that reading literature is a way of putting their
own experiences into a broader perspective. In an NCTE posi-
tion statement, <u>Essentials of English</u> (1982), the study of
literature is said to "add a special dimension to students'
lives by broadening their insights, allowing them to ex-
perience vicariously places, people, and events otherwise
unavailable to them. . . ." (n.p.). The use of dramatic vignettes
in the classroom does this; it stimulates the imagination
in relation to an idea suggested in literature.

During a discussion on Holden Caulfield's obsession with
and appreciation for the "innocents" of the world, this
teacher said:

> "He likes Jane Gallager/ he sees her as innocent
> for a couple of reasons// there's at least implied/
> an implied incestuous relationship/ or at least
> the expectation of one/ with Jane Gallager and/
> her step-father// but Jane Gallager is clearly an
> innocent/ [low] she keeps her kings in the back

> row/ Why?// Why does she keep her kings in the
> back row?" A student responds, "They're safe."
> T says, "They're safe there/ right/ no one can
> get the kings/ when they're on the back row/ the
> game's not going to be very good/ but no one can
> get the kings if you leave them/ back there// the
> game is finally going to be over// and that's
> where Jane Gallager kept them/ they're safe
> there."

Through the presentation of this brief vignette, the charac-

ter Jane Gallager comes alive, can be better understood, can

be pitied, and finds her place in Holden's story. Students

remember such dramatic episodes because suddenly they are

there. They experience the scene and the feelings it evokes

through the teller's animated re-creation.

Word Play

In a delightful example of letting language have its

way, Williard R. Espy introduces An Almanac of Words at Play

(1975) in this way:

> Treat words as a Victorian gentleman treated
> a lady: as his superior, certainly, but not his
> equal. Cosset them. Defer to them. Tell them
> how beautiful they are. Give them your seat in
> the subway. But don't let them break your heart
> as I have let them break mine. Don't take them
> seriously.
>
> Rather, emulate Russell Baker, who knows that
> a deep question deserves a frivolous answer. Or
> Beverly Nichols, whose goal is to disseminate
> entertainment uncluttered with enlightenment.
> Treat words the way such wise men as Lewis Carroll,
> W.S. Gilbert, Ogden Nash, and Cole Porter treated
> them: as a gorgeous joke. (p. xx)

Word play in the classroom is the unexpected offering

of a relaxed teacher who uses words for sport, for amusement,

for diversion, in addition to using words for serious work. To write seriously of word play somehow seems inappropriate, even in a dissertation. Thus I turn to examples of words at play, of which there are an abundance in the fieldnotes of this course.

On the evening of this teacher's lecture on the history of adolescent literature, his only lecture all term, he frequently made fun of the themes of the early novels.

> "Let's move pretty quickly right up through the
> 1950s. . . . First were the domestic novels/ by
> women and about women. . . ." He gives a general
> description of the characteristics of the women.
> "The sinners were mainly men . . . drink/
> tobacco/ adultery . . . the same things we've
> got going for us today."

A little later, the same evening, he said:

> ". . . the really big barn-burner . . . the grand-
> daddy of them all was/ Horatio Alger. . . . He
> wrote and wrote and wrote and was read and read
> and read. . . ." T opens one of Alger's books
> and begins reading. He reads the dialogue with
> exaggerated feeling, with humor, making it corny
> and melodramatic, trite and goody-goody. He
> stops reading and looks up. "You're way ahead
> of me aren't you?" He then continues reading
> the predictable story with fun and glee. Soon
> he closes the book, summarizes what he said about
> Alger, and re-emphasizes the formulaic aspects.
> "By pluck/ diligence/ and hard work/ they suc-
> ceeded// If I appear to be making fun of these
> books// I am."

Again that evening, during a digression on interwoven plots, he said:

> I don't think that I'd want to build a spider web/
> but I'm glad spiders can.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ELUCIDATING

> So when I went away, I thought to myself, "I
> am wiser than this man: neither of us probably
> knows anything that is really good, but he thinks
> that he has knowledge, when he has not, while
> I, having no knowledge, do not think that I
> have. I seem, at any rate, to be a little wiser
> than he is on this point: I do not think that
> I know what I do not know."
>
> The unexamined life is not worth living.
>
> Socrates in Plato's
> Apology

Elucidating is the subprocess of involving in which the
teacher presents the substantive material of the course.
The effective teacher of literature seeks to investigate and
to elucidate ideas by examining their merit through dialogue--
through private dialogue between himself and the literary
work and through open dialogue in class with students. The
previously discussed subprocesses of involving--acclimating,
evoking, establishing rapport, staging--together comprise the
foundation for elucidating. Elucidating occurs after a pre-
pared teacher summons students to discover with him the
unique ways different literary works express experience and
to discover insights presented in or abstracted from those
works. It requires curious, receptive students who are

prepared to enjoy the show and a teacher who enthusiastically
performs. The basic social psychological problem of eluci-
dating is how to make the study of literature a reciprocally
absorbing event. And two principal strategies for creating
elucidating events in a literature classroom are exemplify-
ing and interpreting.

Exemplifying

"The real work of an artist," says Dewey (1934/1958), "is to
build up an experience that is coherent in perception while
moving with constant change in its development" (p. 51). This
applies to both the artistic writer and the artistic teacher.
Literature teachers build up coherent, yet constantly chang-
ing, classroom experiences by providing students with rich
examples from the literature and from their own ideational
associations and remembrances of things past. In part,
exemplifying is the teacher act of presenting text with de-
sign and also of suddenly recalling certain aspects of a text.
And it is the act, through the use of concrete examples, of
explaining the distinctive nature of the written expressions
of an author and of clarifying the ideas, events, and
characterizations an author expresses. Lively, colorful
examples create vivid impressions, intended and otherwise,
concerning a passage or an idea. In the data of this study,
four methods of exemplifying were encountered: describing,
enumerating, comparing, and telling anecdotes.

Describing

> On the board T writes another criterion for
> evaluating literature, "artistry in detail."
> He says, "This is one that I use a great deal.
> . . . How many pleasurable little details are
> in the work?" He repeats this. "What's the
> best restaurant in town?" Several students
> name restaurants. T continues, "Think of the
> best restaurant in town/ why do you like it?"
> He gives some examples of details in restaurants
> that appeal to him. He advises students to
> "identify a little detail that was just right"
> when reading literature. Several students
> mention details from movies. T recalls the
> movie <u>The Apartment</u> in which there was an
> office water cooler filled with gin and
> vermouth.

Students took his advice on attending to details. For in-
stance, after T had invited students to share their impres-
sions of <u>All Together Now</u>, one student said: "I liked the
detail . . . the lacy table cloth, the water pitcher." And
she added that she liked the description of the grandmother's
home because it reminded her of her parents' home.

Discussing the striking details in a work is one means
of describing. Another, and perhaps the most overused, is
giving a general description of the plot. Presenting a plot
summary, however, is an effective ploy for generating student
interest in reading a book. A summary should be brief
enough not to fatigue and long enough to tantalize. The
first night of class, for example, this teacher quickly pre-
viewed each of the required novels. He began with <u>Catcher in
the Rye</u>.

> "I'll be saying this a lot tonight/ 'a book
> that's good/ read it/ trust me' and so on."
> Standing behind the table holding the novel,

> he reads the beginning. Then he gives a brief
> synopsis of the story. "There's a lot of all of
> us in Holden Caulfield," he says. He talks about
> Holden seeing "fuck you" written on a banister.
> This upsets Holden because he is afraid his little
> sister will see it. "That passage/ in my judg-
> ment," says T, "is highly moral. . . . But it's
> had bad consequences for some teachers." Next
> he previews <u>Lord of the Flies</u>.

The third night of class this teacher reviewed the
eight criteria for evaluating literature that he had dis-
cussed, using many examples, the week before. Because the
criterion of internal consistency continued to elude some
students, he clarified it further with the following example:

> "A book usually doesn't get published if it lacks
> internal consistency." He talks about <u>Naked Came
> the Stranger</u>, a novel in which each chapter was
> written by a different person, although it bore
> one author's name, a fictitious name. He says
> that someone told writers: "Mary Jones is having
> a series of affairs/ you write one of the
> chapters/ write just as badly as you can." The
> point was to discover if publishers and reviewers
> would find it worthy. And several did. T men-
> tions an outstanding review of it published in
> a Charleston, SC, newspaper. "If you get a
> chance/ thumb through <u>Naked Came the Stranger</u>.
> . . . I don't know if it's in the public
> library or not. . . . an example of not having
> internal consistency." He tells us how even
> the main character's appearance changes from
> chapter to chapter.

Thus a counterexample of internal consistency was described.
And a concept was clarified.

But robust descriptions need not be as long and detailed
as the three examples above. They can consist of a well-
focused phrase or two. For example, during this teacher's
presentation of <u>Ordinary People</u>, he mentioned the portrayal
of Con in the movie. And he suggested:

> Next time you see it/ notice the haunted look
> in his eyes . . . which disappears near the
> end. . . . Just see the movie through his eyes
> . . . in the book you get it in the language.

Describing is using language to paint mental pictures.
Descriptions of concepts relevant to the study of literature
and descriptions of entire works or aspects of works present
concrete examples that students can imaginatively grasp.

Enumerating

Many notions are best understood through an enumeration
of examples. Some philosophers concern themselves with such
notions as "good" and "beauty." G.E. Moore (1903) declared
that "good" is indefinable, that it is a simple notion, like
"yellow" and "sweet," that defies description. Because notions
like yellow and good comprise the most basic parts of any
description, they can, he said, only be understood in terms
of the vast variety of things that have these notions in
common, e.g., yellow shirts, yellow lemons, yellow leaves,
yellow eyes.

Although literary notions may not be as linguistically
basic as "good" or "yellow," simple enumerations of their
uses or attributes are often the best source for understand-
ing their place in literature. Take, for instance, the
notion of foreshadowing. A definition can be given, but
the term comes to light by enumerating its uses in literature.
During the second evening on A Separate Peace, the teacher
of this study said:

"Fiction needs to be built on itself/ and authors
. . . help their readers/ by doing something
called foreshadowing." He writes the term on
the board. He gives several examples of poor
foreshadowing, e.g., soap opera endings--"Will
Myra and Todd find eternal bliss in Spokane?"
He offers other such corny examples and says,
"The questions are much too blatant. . . . Good
literature is more subtle." He talks some more
around foreshadowing and then says, "The best
examples . . . the mystery." He mentions Agatha
Christie. He gives an example from one of her
novels, acting it out. Then he mentions the
Ellery Queen mysteries. Returning to A Separate
Peace, he says, "So let's identify some instances
of foreshadowing that Finny might fall again/
that he might die."

The next week of class, while the teacher was reviewing the

past week's events, a student interrupted and asked:

"How do you pick foreshadowing up/ do you have
to read a book three or four times?" T answers,
using the movie On Golden Pond as an example.
He refers to the daughter, played by Jane Fonda,
who at the beginning of the movie comments on
never calling her father by anything other
than Norman and on catching the big fish in
the pond. He says, "In both instances these
instances of foreshadowing did in fact come
true. . . . But more commonly/ it comes with
the second or third reading."

Enumerating is also a useful technique for explicating

a literary theme. For example, during the discussion on

Lord of the Flies, this teacher pointed out that, in many

respects, this novel is about "the development and breakdown

of the social order." Then he said:

"Let's trace some of the elements of the
development of a civilized society." Without
any apparent spurring on T's part, the students
make suggestions, e.g., "rules," "a fire,"
"choose a leader." T adds "hunters/ hut
builders// they realize they have to divvy up"
the responsibilities. More discussion. Then
T asks, "What are some of the things that
start the crumbling of the civilization?" No

response. "What they were doing// or weren't/
I don't care." Students suggest painting their
faces, the bathrooms, the dance. After a while,
T says that the points "I would bring up are
. . . killing the pig and acting out the sexual
fantasies . . . the violence between Jack and
Piggy . . . which actually breaks one of the
connections they had with civilization// the
breaking of the lens." T refers them to the
book and reads.

Whether the act of enumerating is in the service of
understanding literary terms or literary themes, character
flaws or character feelings, the teacher act of enumerating
encourages students to discover the structure and signifi-
cance of literature.

Comparing

T refers us to two examples in Ordinary People
"that are worth our attention." Both the Con
and the Cal passages use stream-of-consciousness
narrative. "Question for you/ why not Beth?"
Students comment. T says that he once heard
Guest say: "I didn't even know what Beth was
thinking a lot of the time because she didn't
want me to know." He continues, "Cal wants
you to know."

Comparing is a method of exemplifying that examines the
resemblances and differences among certain aspects of a
literary work or works. In the excerpt above, for example,
an author's presentation of the thoughts of her main charac-
ters are compared. In the following excerpt, the teacher
compared the general quality of two novels by the same
author.

T begins class by showing us his large-print
edition of Knowles' new novel Peace Breaks Out,
the sequel to A Separate Peace. . . . He comments

that this novel is not as good as <u>A Separate Peace</u>. He points out a flaw, a lack of internal consistency. For instance, Dr. Stanpole says, "two students dying on me in two years," but the death of Finny in <u>A Separate Peace</u> is not mentioned anywhere in the new book.

Novels written by different authors were also compared. A student criticism on the "pacing" of <u>All Together Now</u> induced this teacher to talk about various "ways of telling stories." Here he summoned <u>The Grapes of Wrath</u>, <u>Cry the Beloved Country</u>, <u>Andersonville</u>, among other novels, to his aid for exemplifying various structures that novelists can use for telling stories.

In this class, comparisons between different genres were frequently made to exemplify similarities of theme. For example, before presenting <u>The Chocolate War</u>, T said:

"I want to take the pivotal line in the book and tell you a little bit about that. . . . 'Do I dare disturb the universe?'" T tells the class that he's going to read parts of "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" in order "to give you a rough idea of/ the theme/ of/ <u>The Chocolate War</u>." He reads.

And during the discussion on "Mateo Falcone," a short story in the anthology he edited,

T asks the English majors to explain what Dante's <u>Inferno</u> is about. G says, "the punishment fits the crime." T elaborates. He asks us to name the three people on the lowest rung. He begins by naming Judas but, after a pause, also lists Brutus and Cassius. "Their crime?/ They betrayed a friend." T makes a case for Mateo having killed his son who betrayed the hideout of a fugitive. He says "that Mateo was justified/ at least in his own mind."

Comparing gives the teacher the opportunity to show students the prevalence and significance of such literary

staples as theme, structure, and characterization. By draw-
ing from the abundance of written expressions, the teacher,
while exemplifying class topics, strengthens the notion that
literature is an art with a rich tradition.

Telling Anecdotes

Dewey (1934/1958) describes artistic "doing" as "not a
matter of caprice nor yet of routine." But rather, "the ex-
pression is emotional and guided by purpose" (p. 50). Telling
anecdotes in the literature classroom also has these attri-
butes--capricious yet controlled, emotional yet focused.

Anecdotes, although sometimes built into a lesson,
usually do not become a teacher routine through teacher in-
tent. When positive student reaction occurs and when, per-
haps simultaneously, the teacher feels that the story has a
strategic place in his presentation, an anecdote may become
a planned part of a later show. During an interview I asked
the teacher of this study if he reflected on some of the
things he did in class and then said to himself that he
would have to do them again. He responded: "Yes/ I've got
some lines I use . . . that I know are foolproof/ they worked
before. . . ."

Telling anecdotes is the method of exemplifying in which
the teacher shares those personal experiences that pertain to
class topics and class interests. For example:

    Introducing Zindel's novels, T says: "I'll tell
    you a quick story/ and we'll be done for the
    night." He tells us that My Darling, My Hamburger

derived its title from a scene in the novel about
a sex education class where a student asked:
"What do you do if a boy wants to go all the
way?" And the teacher said: "Tell him/ 'Darling/
I want a hamburger/ let's go for a hamburger.'"
T then tells us about a time when he and a friend
were talking in a hotel lobby at a convention,
late at night. They noticed that one of the
female participants had two male escorts and
they wondered which one she would end up with.
It turned out that the three went out for a
hamburger.

And when previewing the Brancato novel *Winning*, this teacher

said:

"Let me tell you a story about that." He tells
us about his daughter's college basketball try-
out. As an aside he says that girls' athletics
is not the same as a university head football
coach picking up the hopefuls at the airport.
With girls' athletics, "Dad has to pick up the
tab." His daughter broke her leg in the try-
outs. While she was still in her cast, T gave
her *Winning* to read. He says, "Did I read it
first?/ No/ What did I do?/ I gave it to her."
He then explains that the book is about a guy
who was injured in a football mishap and would
probably always be paralyzed.

Interpreting

"To interpret" usually signals one of two important

activities in the study of literature: explaining text and

infusing meaning. Although both activities are closely

related, the tone of the presentations and the effect of

the presentations on students differ. Explaining text brings

about a professorial accounting of what the teacher thinks

the author or characters did or intended. Infusing meaning

imparts a sense of personal reformulation on how a passage

or a work affected the teacher's thoughts and feelings.

Explaining implies authority; infusing demonstrates concentrated interest. Few college students tread on teacher authority, but many will venture to share their points of imaginative contact with a work. And the latter occurs in classrooms where the teacher not only explains texts but also infuses them with personal meaning.

Dewey (1934/1958) says:

> Ultimately there are but two philosophies. One of them accepts life and experience in all its uncertainty, mystery, doubt, and half-knowledge and turns that experience upon itself to deepen and intensify its own qualities--to imagination and art. This is the philosophy of Shakespeare and Keats. (p. 34)

And this philosophy is the essence of interpreting. Interpreting is the fine art of complementing textual explanations with personal insights.

Explaining Text

> What I'd like to do with Catcher in the Rye/ is a couple of things/ I'd like to look first at the ideas in it// I'd like for you to keep some overall framework in mind/ that when we look at these/ you're really trying to do two things/ you're trying to learn more about Catcher in the Rye/ and you're also trying to learn more about reading/ a novel/ any novel/ and we're using Catcher in the Rye as a vehicle for that.

Before explaining the text itself, this teacher explained his procedures and rationale. The study of Catcher in the Rye, he implied, was part of something bigger. It served as a model for how texts can be read and, as the data reveal, for how texts can be interpreted.

An hour into the discussion on <u>Catcher in the Rye</u>, this teacher returned to his objective on explicitly (i.e., not leaving the matter to chance) teaching ways to read a novel.

> "One of the ways of learning more about any novel you read// and the better the novel the probably more typical this is/ is to read the opening ten or fifteen pages a couple or three times/ and begin to see the themes that are set forth in those opening pages and then that are expounded upon// If you'll turn just to page three. . . ." He reads. And then comments, "Again/ laughter early on/ much less at the end."

In this course, teaching students how to read a novel included instruction on literary devices to look for. Such literary devices as foreshadowing, starting a novel in media res, and using a deus ex machina resolution were introduced and discussed within the context of a particular novel. These terms were then later used to explain the structure of other novels. For example, this teacher introduced the notion of deus ex machina during the session on <u>Lord of the Flies</u>.

> "And then comes the rescue/ Latin phrase number two." T asks students to guess what the phrase is. One student gets it--deus ex machina. T talks about this maneuver as used in litera- ture. He moves toward a student and pretends that he's about to shoot her. And he says that before he can fire the gun "someone opens the door and shoots me/ or the gun doesn't go off." Then T tells the class about when he and his family visited a Greek amphitheatre and about how the deus ex machina works. . . . T explains that if it hadn't been for Golding's use of this literary device, each of the boys would probably have been killed one after the other, much like the characters in Christie's <u>And Then There Were None</u>.

Later in the term, T ended his discussion on <u>The Outsiders</u>

by saying, "it's a deus ex machina ending/ two characters were conveniently killed."

But explaining text is much more than telling students what to look for and what to do when rereading. Literature teachers also frequently stage professorial accounts of what an author meant or could have meant.

The teacher of this study used more authoritative intonations and postures during his planned discourses on textual explication. And, at these times, students responded by assuming demeanors of diligent learners and by taking notes. These moments of authoritative discourse occurred often but were brief. Professorial accounting was interspersed with anecdotes, questions for students, and student discussion. For example, using a Freudian interpretation to develop a theme in Lord of the Flies, this teacher wrote the terms "id," "ego," and "superego" on the board. He elicited students' help in explaining these terms. Then he said:

> "All the characters of Lord of the Flies are one
> big organism. . . ." He lists the outstanding
> characteristic of each of the characters and
> describes the minor characters running around
> in the story as "fingers." T says that in the
> novel "organism reverts to id dominance. . . .
> If it comes down to just thee and me . . . then
> watch out. . . ." He then says, "The defects
> in society are/ defects in human nature." He
> mentions the chase scene in the movie The
> French Connection, and says that he "couldn't
> help coming out of that movie . . . seeing the
> cars revving up their motors . . . thinking
> that there must be something in what Golding is
> arguing/ that evil is inherent in us all . . .
> perhaps best exemplified by Roger." He pauses
> and asks, "Ok/ what comments do you want to
> make?"

During the session on <u>All Together Now</u>, T said:

> "Bridgers/ it seems to me/ has created three
> major sub-plots// if you will/ let's look at
> them." On the board he puts three pairs of
> relationships:
> > Casey--Dwayne
> > Gwen --Taylor
> > Pansy--Hazzard.
> He says that he thinks it was "a neat kind of
> thing" to make the plots "woven/meshed" together
> because we "get a multi-plotted kind of thing."
> After expounding some on these relationships,
> T invites the class to share their reactions.

Explaining text can be, and often is, dry, non-involving,
and even irritating. For teachers to avoid boring and annoy-
ing students, an effective strategy appears to be to inter-
sperse professorial discourse with provocative digressions
and directed discussion. In the following excerpt from a
student interview, an English education major describes her
reaction to most literature classes.

> J. Would you compare T's class with another
> literature class that you've had?
>
> H. Oh good heavens// In most of the literature
> classes that I've had it's a lecture situation
> and you don't have the discussion as much/
> and I don't know whether that's because/
> they're strictly English professors/ they
> don't lead discussions/ or what the problem
> is// Most of the discussions I have had in
> other lit classes have been/ pretty awful.
>
> J. Can you be more specific than "awful?"
>
> H. [Laughs] Well/ it's a matter of/ the profes-
> sor didn't give it any direction/ and we'd get
> really strange people in the class who'd have
> off the wall ideas// I think that in the
> interpretation of literature you need to be
> very open to things/ but I mean sometimes
> it's blatant that they're totally/ I mean
> they might as well be talking about a differ-
> ent book . . . and you don't really benefit
> from something like that. . . . Compared to

other-/ there was no comparison with other lit
classes// I think that he definitely does an
excellent job.

This student thought that T did "an excellent job" not only
because he directed discussion but also because he would
"tie in his little stories" to the lesson. About these "little
stories," she said, "it gives you another view of either the
author or the story or some point that he's trying to make."

Thus explaining text, to be involving, is a composite
of professorial accounting, directed discussion, and "little
stories."

Infusing Meaning

The examined life is an ideal. People cannot scrutinize
their every word and deed. But there are times in which we
look at ourselves closely, wondering why the mirror is
shattered or why fortune has been so good. Literature
offers vast opportunities for examining our own lives and
the lives of others. Literature, if nothing else, opens
previously hidden passageways to self-knowledge and to a
more encompassing understanding of human experience, of other
people's thoughts and actions and motivations. The teacher
who reads and presents literature with few defenses against
the emotions and memories that some literature inevitably
evokes, will, in his own fashion, elucidate the immense role
reading can play in reflecting on and reaffirming the over-
whelming richness of the world. And this is the role of

infusing meaning into literature in the classroom: to foster, through sharing and revealing personal insights, student identification and involvement with a literary work.

In the act of infusing meaning, the teacher does not claim to have the definitive interpretation of a literary work. Rather, he offers _an_ interpretation that, based on his observations and readings, seems to him to have validity and worth. And although he is prepared to support his interpretation with textual evidence, he is open to other interpretations students suggest and support. Dewey (1934/1958) explains that artistic expression has two collateral factors. One is knowing what to look for and how to see the "expressive object."

> The other factor that is required in order that a work may be expressive to a percipient is meanings and values extracted from prior experiences and funded in such a way that they fuse with the qualities directly presented in the work of art. (p. 98)

Further, Dewey claims:

> The expressiveness of the object is the report and celebration of the complete fusion of what we undergo and what our activity of attentive perception brings into what we receive by means of the senses. (p. 103)

Infusing meaning requires a fusion of prior experiences with the literary work. It is, in Rosenblatt's (1938/1968) terms, a "transaction" between the reader's reactions to a text and the text itself. "In the molding of any specific literary experience," Rosenblatt says, "what the student brings to literature is as important as the literary text itself" (p. 82). And the same is true for the teacher of literature.

An excerpt from the audiotaped class on Catcher in the Rye demonstrates this teacher's willingness to offer and to support his interpretations and also shows his tolerance, perhaps even encouragement, of dissenting interpretations. The discussion was about loneliness and listening.

K. I mean/ how can Holden tell if people listen when he doesn't really tell them anything?

T. Well// give me some examples/ can you?

K. He talks about the ducks.

T. All right.

K. You know/ I mean who cares about the ducks/ so he doesn't really have a valid complaint because he never really openly/ I mean he doesn't really//

T. He doesn't engage them in conversation?

K. When he was with Luce at the bar/ he didn't really talk with him/ he just kept kind of bugging him/ until he really pissed the guy off/ he didn't tell him he was lonely or anything/// I mean is that in the book or-?

T. No/ but that's all right// whether or not/ you'll discover in here that whether I agree/ I hope is completely immaterial// No/ I think he's trying to communicate/ but one of his problems is/ that he's curious/ legitimately curious about the ducks/ and another is that he's not a very good communicator// He hasn't read Dale Carnegie// You know/ if you've read Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People// for me to have a good conversation with Mary/ what do I talk about/ I talk about Mary// I find out what's on Mary's mind/ and I talk/ I talk a whole lot about that/ Holden's not into that scene at all/ He talks about things/ that are/ related to him/ of interest/ of curiosity/ to him/ and some choose not to listen/ but in some instances/ he's clearly/ I think/ K/ he's clearly responding to people's questions/ only to discover/ they're not listening.

K. Do you have an example?

T. Yeah/ Spencer/ page 10// [several hands go
    up] hang on to your comments a second/ I'll
    read it.

This instance of a student and the teacher working through
an idea in a novel is not an isolated case. The fieldnotes
of this course are filled with student interpretive endeavors,
with teacher reactions to student comments and to the novels,
and with group exploration of themes and characters. This
teacher continually sought to spur student reactions to the
novels and frequently reminded students that interpreting
is an essential activity in the reading of literature. In
the discussion, for example, on A Separate Peace,

> T says, "You're St. Peter at the Pearly Gates.
> . . ." God's too busy helping Reagan with
> Reaganomics to become involved. "And Gene comes
> to the door// Would you let him in?" E says
> that she knows someone like Gene: "He's intel-
> ligent/ wears glasses/ is tiny-" T interrupts,
> "That let's me out/ I was doing okay until you
> got to tiny." E continues. Several other
> students comment. T says, "One of the things
> you can do with novels/ is the various ways of
> putting an interpretation to it. . . . Tonight
> we're going to see how a good novel admits of
> many interpretations."

In this chapter, the teacher acts of elucidating are
described as the reciprocal processes of involving students
in the substantive material of the course and of becoming
involved in student reactions and interpretations. Eluci-
dating is an artistic combination of permitting prior ex-
periences to influence discourse on literary works and of
being open to the feelings and memories that literary works
evoke. It is exemplifying and interpreting text with a

vigilant eye on how the examples and interpretations affect students. The elucidating teacher shares his insights without forcing his conclusions. And students share their insights with the awareness that their comments will be heard and may even influence the direction of the discussion. "Every class session was," one student fervently said, "a learning experience/ it really was/ it truly was a learning experience."

CHAPTER NINE

EXPRESSING PURPOSE

> Now the intellects of men are not as strong
> as their wills, and men generally believe what-
> ever they want to believe, particularly when
> those beliefs reflect upon their own worth among
> men and the value of their endeavors. _Wisdom_
> is thus not what men first of all seek. They
> seek, instead, the justification for what they
> happen to cherish.

Richard Taylor
Metaphysics

Expressing purpose is the subprocess of involving in
which the teacher exhibits his personal and professional be-
liefs, interests, and sentiments. Explicit or tacit, heart-
felt teacher concerns surface, and surface often. These
concerns may, in part, be outlined in the course objectives.
But more likely, they are of a cloth so basic to the teacher's
personality and present life circumstances that they per-
meate, ever so subtly, the teacher's textual emphasis,
physical demeanor, and over messages.

Expressing purpose is idiosyncratic to each teacher.
That a teacher has a purpose to express is what matters.
Teachers set goals for themselves. And those who stop be-
lieving in their goals are in trouble--personally and pro-
fessionally. A teacher in Blase's (1982) study on teacher

burn-out explained her low level of work motivation in this way:

> I guess what happened this year was that I was more aware of myself getting into a rut. . . . Having less enthusiasm means unwillingness to change, to innovate, experiment, accomplishing goals. Disenchantment, discouragement, inability to reach or achieve goals you set for yourself or for your students, all are contributing factors. (pp. 108-109)

Teachers who, however, continually envision that which drew them to teaching in the first place, e.g., the enjoyment of sharing their interests with others, are those who express, and often, impart purpose.

In the data of this study, although a strong sense of teacher purpose permeated all class sessions, no concrete strategies for expressing purpose were revealed. Perhaps the subprocess of expressing purpose is not, due to its pervasive nature, susceptible to an explication of discrete skills or strategies. Nevertheless, it is a significant ingredient in successful teaching. And often awareness of and reminders about possibilities are prompting enough for renewing cherished visions. To this end, two characteristics of expressing purpose--playfulness and responsiveness--are discussed below.

Playfulness

Play is how children explore the world. Play creates a relaxed attitude toward investigating unfamiliar ideas and behavior. The term "playfulness," in this study, refers to

a cluster of attributes that, using Wittgenstein's (1953) phrase, have a "family resemblance." These attributes include risk-taking, innovation, exploration, openness, and curiosity. They are communicated to students through the teacher's employment of a variety of strategies for presenting material, through his willingness to laugh at himself when he misses the mark or makes a mistake in class, and through his constant inquiries concerning student reactions and concerns.

Benjamin Bloom (1982), in his study of the characteristics of master teachers of pianists and Olympic swimmers, found that master teachers were "remembered primarily for their personal qualities and for the initial encouragement and motivation they gave students to explore the field in a playful way" (p. 664). In other words, these teachers had a knack for communicating their confidence in students and for urging students to explore the depths of their talents. Their purpose was to train champions; their procedure was to encourage play.

The teacher who expresses purpose fits the increasingly popular teacher-as-artist model (cf. Barone, 1983; Eisner, 1978, 1979, 1983; Grumet, 1983; Rubin, 1983). Grumet says:

> It is the function of art to reorganize experience so it is perceived freshly. At the very least, the painting, the poem, or the play cleanses a familiar scene, washing away the film of habit and dust collected over time so that it is seen anew. When it is most radical, the work of art simultaneously draws the viewer to it, engaging expectations, memories, recognitions, and then interrupts the viewer's customary

response, contradicting expectations with new possibilities, violating memories, displacing recognition with estrangement. (p. 31)

Then she suggests that the function of art is also the function of teaching. And Barone, agreeing with Grumet, says:

Learning can occur otherwise, but a truly educational experience is likely to possess certain fundamentally aesthetic attributes. Among these attributes are an aesthetic dynamic form, buoyant emotional qualities, and a vital tension between the experiencer and the experienced. (p. 22)

The college literature classroom is an ideal place for aesthetic teaching and aesthetic learning--for playfulness.

Henry James, in a letter to H.G. Wells, said: "It is art that <u>makes</u> life, makes interest, makes importance . . . and I know of no substitute whatever for the force and beauty of its process." Likewise, it is art that enlivens the literature classroom. Artistic teaching creates interest, creates importance, imparts meaning, and involves students in the literature experience. Playfulness is the teacher attribute that turns the dismally dull into the aesthetically exciting.

A primary purpose of the teacher of this study was to make each of his classes entertaining. And in the role of the performing artist, he played with his own thoughts and feelings before the often intrigued crowd. For example, one student responded to this teacher's reading of Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" and to his linking the poem to a theme in <u>The Chocolate War</u> as follows:

E. T probably talked about that poem all together five minutes and I got more out of what he

said about that poem than the four days we spent on it in poetry class.

J. Now why?/ I wonder// what do you think?

E. Well/ he touched on a theme/ he just said like the poem is trying to say/ "Do you want to follow the crowd?/ Do you want to be that person who stands back and looks while the Jones go on and do what they want to do . . . are you going to go along with them?"/ . . . then I went back to Prufrock and read it again/ "Oh/ I get it!"/ whereas before [in the other class] there was nothing . . . that we could relate to/ nothing.

In the process of elucidating a theme, this teacher also demonstrated that literature raises questions that many of us, from time to time, ask ourselves. During the discussion on The Chocolate War, he revealed that he felt that he was in a dilemma similar to Prufrock and to Jerry Renault. The poem and the novel were alive for the teacher. He expressed his involvement and sought to involve students by reading, by interpreting, and by exploring the ideas and feelings that these works can evoke.

But the enjoyment and significance of literature is by no means limited to its potential for stimulating reflection on the profound questions of human experience. Another expressed purpose of this teacher--a subpurpose, say, of entertaining--was to provide escape from the trite and trying and to show how literature can be such an escape. For example:

Talking about life's problems, T says, "You're overwhelmed by it all and occasionally you need to escape/ . . . the problems that beset us// if we can forget that once in a while. . . . Do you realize that there are people/ not in this room/ who have never lost themselves in a book. . . ?/ Happily most of us have had that experience where

we could not/ literally/ put it down. . . . I
burden my mind with a lot of trivial bullshit/
I like to forget it now and again/ I don't have
to have real life in everything I do."

Excape and insight, on several occasions in this class,

joined in playful interludes. An instance of one of these

delightful moments occurred during the first session on

Catcher in the Rye.

    F. I'd like to go back to the question of the/
        the question of the ducks/ that kind of
        bothered me . . . because it went throughout
        the book/ you know?

    Several other students comment. One student
    jokes about the ducks becoming people's
    Christmas dinner.

    T. Yeah/ I don't know/ I don't know/ it doesn't
        bother me near as much as it bothered Holden///
        but I can//// Haven't you/ within the last
        day or two/ the last week or two/ the last
        month or two/ been/ [slowly] concerned about
        something/ been sort of obsessed with some-
        thing that really/ in the grand scheme of
        things/ [quickly] isn't all that important/
        probably isn't/ doesn't have a whole lot to do
        with where/ what happens when// I wish I could
        think of a good example// [in a low voice]
        Help me out/ you have an example// of the
        kind of what happens to the ducks?

    B. I wonder when dollar bills get worn out.

    T. Yes/ good question/ B/ What happens to old
        dollar bills// They get in my billfold.
        [Laughter]

    K. They shred them up.

    T. They shred them up/ ok// Now you know/ B/
        they shred them up// But now next week/ N
        tells us about the ducks in Central Park.
        [Laughter]

    N. They come here to Lake Alice. [Laughter]

"Playfulness," as it is used in this section, is intended

as a comprehensive term for describing an attitude toward and

an attribute of expressing purpose. Unfortunately, it does not adequately convey the sense of purpose that artistic teachers express. Further, the term becomes a technical one in its use here because it encompasses much more than the mischievous and sportive.

Bertrand Russell (1927) said, while looking at a table, "I deny that I see a table." Other philosophers complained that he was using the word "see" in a technical sense. He agreed. He was attempting to formulate a precise language that scientists could use for explaining human perception. In his efforts, he contradicted normal usage and postulated new possibilities.

The efforts in this writing are not so grand as Russell's. But there is a basis for comparison. Whereas Russell in his odd use of "see" intended to disrupt normal thought on what it is to perceive objects, this section, it is hoped, will stimulate others to consider ways, other than the normal, in which we can think of communicating purpose in the classroom.

Playfulness is exploring, taking risks, innovating, inquiring, and disclosing. It is both demonstrating ways of doing and involving others in doing. And most significantly, playfulness in the literature classroom may perhaps propel students to discover for themselves, outside the classroom, the delights and insights in literature.

Responsiveness

Like playfulness, responsiveness is a characteristic of expressing purpose that designates a cluster of attributes which have family resemblance. That is, such attributes as supportiveness, understanding, sensitivity, empathy, spontaneity, accessibility, and flexibility are exhibited by the teacher who is responsive to the students, to the text, and to his own feelings. A primary purpose of the responsive teacher is to form a cooperative team with and among the students, i.e., to foster esprit de corps. He does this by sensitizing students to his interests and by being receptive to theirs and, also, by frequently alluding to class progress in approximating or reaching course goals.

Responsiveness in the classroom is an aspect of what Goffman (1967) calls an "interaction ritual." Goffman says:

> Just as the member of any group is expected to have self-respect, so also is he expected to sustain a standard of considerateness; he is expected to go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present, and he is expected to do this willingly and spontaneously because of emotional identification with others and with their feelings. . . .

> The combined effect of the rule of self-respect and the rule of considerateness is that the person tends to conduct himself during an encounter so as to maintain both his own face and the face of the other participants. (pp. 10-11)

But responsiveness, to express purpose, is much more than abiding by the "rules" of self-respect and considerateness. In an earlier writing, Goffman (1959) explains that

> we often find that the personal front of the
> performer is employed not so much because it
> allows him to present himself as he would like
> to appear but because his appearance and manner
> can do something for a scene of a wider scope.
> (p. 77)

Responsiveness is a characteristic of a teacher who endeavors

to broaden student perspectives and who expects mutual

assistance in the efforts.

To endeavor and to put forth effort are crucial teacher

acts for involving students in the "wider scope" of the sub-

ject matter. Further, for the purpose of fostering esprit de

corps, and so for making students--intellectually and

emotionally--a part of the instructional scene, the teacher

responds to the texts and elucidates his pet themes with a

studied spontaneity, with a certain freshness of presenta-

tion. And these actions, whether intentionally staged or

unreflectively expressed, often result in students turning

to the text and to wanting to share their findings with the

class.

In an interview, one student talked about her class

participation in this way:

> It was easy to talk and you didn't have to address
> all your questions to T/ but to the group/ and I
> think that gave a lot of inspiration for more
> feedback from the other people. . . . T would pre-
> sent things and present good questions which
> would make me want to respond/ but mostly I
> wanted to see how the other students were going
> to respond also/ especially with what I had to
> say or what I thought about it.

During an interview with the teacher of this study, I

asked what he thought was "the most important thing" about

teaching literature. He responded:

I think probably the most important thing is to
have fun with it/ and certainly/ fun's a subsump-
tive term/ under that could be the notion that one
of the reasons I'm having fun with it is that I'm
learning a lot about life/ another reason that
I'm having fun with it is that I've seen language
beautifully used/ <u>Ordinary People</u> for example/
Judith Guest just uses/ parts of that where the
language is just/ I think/ highly skilled// Salinger/
Salinger's book too// so the subsuming reason is
fun/ but under that/ perhaps the reason I would//
put upper most is/ through literature you learn
more about life.

He ended the course by telling the students:

"I've been delighted/ with the response from
you. . . . It's been a good good course." He
thanks them several times, in several ways.
He talks about really enjoying teaching this
class. "If you're going to teach it/ enjoy it."

This course was from start to finish enjoyable. The
teacher was playful with and responsive to the students and
to the texts. Esprit de corps was established; aesthetic
experiences reigned.

PART III

CONCLUSION

CHAPTER TEN

INVOLVING: A SUMMARY

Not, then, men and their moments.
Rather moments and their men.

Erving Goffman
Interaction Ritual

The seven preceding chapters explicate a substantive grounded theory on the process of involving college students in a course on adolescent literature. This theory was systematically generated from an extensive data collection and was illustrated with excerpts from the data.

The involving process was first described as having two pervasive and defining characteristics: reciprocity and recursiveness. Reciprocity is the interactional force a teacher engenders by directing his words and actions toward receiving a show of enthusiasm from students, and a teacher is, in turn, affected by such a show. Recursiveness is the interactional force that comes about through heuristically derived behaviors that develop into routines used time and again depending on classroom contingencies, i.e., depending on what a teacher and the students need at the moment to spur the next involving event. The forces of reciprocity and recursiveness work together to insure that what has been

done and what is about to be done are instrumental to each other and to insure the continuation of mutually absorbing events.

Then the six subprocesses that implement the core process of involving were explained and illustrated: (1) "acclimating" adapts students to the classroom environment and orients them to the teacher's expectations; (2) "evoking" obtains, maintains, and directs student attention; (3) "establishing rapport" creates a classroom environment conducive to open, nonthreatening, and personal exchanges of ideas; (4) "staging" is both arranging the performance and performing; (5) "elucidating" is the presentation of the substantive material of the course; and (6) "expressing purpose" exhibits the teacher's personal and professional beliefs, interests, and sentiments.

Together these subprocesses and their attendant strategies, conditions, and dimensions comprise a taxonomy of teacher behaviors for creating involving events. The primary concepts used to describe and explain the notion of involving are couched in terms of processes because they designate a series of purposeful actions and speech acts which aim toward a particular result or consequence. The intended result is to solve a central social psychological problem that confronts most teachers--how to establish and maintain student involvement.

The process of involving is a moving of sensibilities toward an immediate experience. In this respect, involving

is a kind of aesthetic experience; it is receptive perception and heightened vitality. And this is true whether the stimulus for becoming involved is a work of art or a classroom teacher. But the process of involving entails much more. Involving, for it to constitute a unified experience resulting from an interaction of individual and environment, is, in Dewey's (1934/1958) words, "a transformation of interaction into participation and communication" (p. 22). Further, the involving teacher's goal is to foster teacher-student and student-student exchanges that are saturated with "conscious meaning derived from communication and deliberate expression" (p. 23). The subprocesses of involving, thus, are interrelated variables that build a series of classroom events into a coherent experience characterized by meaningful exchanges concerning a substantive area.

The theory of involving presented in this study is a substantive theory developed for consideration by literature teachers and other English educators. The theory, however, offers hypotheses and strategies that apply to areas other than the teaching of literature. Student involvement is a central variable in the teaching process. And how to establish and maintain involvement is a social psychological problem that confronts teachers of all grade levels and in all content areas.

Perhaps the crucial question to address is why do educators bring students together in a classroom group? Certainly one of the principal reasons is for the teacher to

guide students' studies through lectures, assignments, and directed discussions. When, however, lectures are no more than reiterations of the text, assignments are outside of class reading and writing, and "directed discussions" are really recitations lacking an inquiry approach or student attentiveness and responsiveness, then students can legitimately question the need for class meetings. Student involvement in the classroom proceedings signals that something exciting is going on in the participants' thoughts and feelings. Discovery, change, learning is taking place. The learning may not be enduring knowledge of substantive material; it may be on how to express and share ideas with a group of people, and this is by no means an insignificant skill to acquire. In any case, for classroom experiences to be worthwhile, socially comfortable, and educationally beneficial, they must be composed of reciprocally absorbing events between teacher and students, between student and students. To this end a formal pedagogical theory of involving is needed.

The study presented here explains the ways in which one teacher involved his students in a literature course. It is a case study, an analysis of one teacher's behaviors, speech acts, and interactions with students. A formal theory on the process of involving students in classroom experiences cannot be built from one case study. In order to understand the process and to see if the subprocesses discussed in this study are generalizable across substantive areas, more

research and more theoretical depth must be forthcoming.
Other case studies of teachers who receive outstanding stu-
dent evaluations can help to clarify the notion of involving
and can help to refine strategies for generating sustained
student interest in a course. Multiple teacher studies, for
example a team of qualitative researchers observing and
interviewing both involving and noninvolving teachers, can
provide contrasts and verifications on teacher acts which
lead to a series of involving events that coalesce into a
unified, meaningful classroom experience. And such quali-
tative research should lead to the use of other research
methodologies--perhaps the development of teacher training
programs that can be measured for effectiveness based on a
performance instrument or perhaps a comparison of student
learning outcomes with a teacher involvement measure.

My propensity, however, is to discourage the use of the
taxonomy presented in this study or in future refinements of
this taxonomy as a means for developing an instrument for
evaluating teachers. Rather, my hope is that teachers,
student teachers, administrators, and other educators will
read this study from the perspective of how they can become
more aware of student response and more deliberate in their
encouragement of student participation. Thus, a formal
pedagogical theory of involving, as I envision it, would
offer educators a theoretical ground for why and how to
transform classroom interaction into receptive perception,
energetic participation, and vital communication.

Dewey (1934/1958) says that when "the natural and the cultivated blend in one, acts of social intercourse are works of art" (p. 63). Involving is a social act that blends the natural spontaneity of the teacher with the teacher's cultivated teaching style. Involving is an art. As such, the process of involving is not something that can be demanded. Teachers who perceive a lack of involvement in their classrooms should be gently urged in the ways of involving; teachers who create involving events should be greatly cherished.

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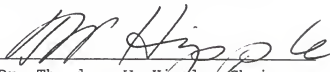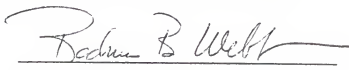   Publishing Co., Inc.

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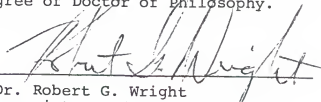
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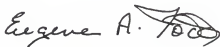   Specialization Teacher
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